

**WYOMING PYS 2020-2023**  
**(Revised Spring 2022)**

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## **WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE**

This is a unified plan

### **B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Wyoming will not provide an introduction or executive summary.

### **I. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS**

#### **A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS**

##### **ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS**

###### **i. Economic Analysis.**

Wyoming endured unprecedented job losses in 2020, largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly declining energy prices. Over the year, Wyoming lost more than 16,000 jobs and total wages decreased by more than \$500 million.

As a result of these changes, Wyoming entered its third period of economic downturn in recent years (see Table 1 and Figures 1a and 1b). The Research & Planning (R&P) Unit of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has defined an *economic downturn* as a period of at least two consecutive quarters of over-the-year decline in both average monthly employment and total wages based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Declining energy prices preceded the two previous downturns. The first downturn lasted five quarters, from the first quarter of 2009 (2009Q1) to the first quarter of 2010 (2010Q1), and closely followed the national Great Recession (referred to in this report as the *2009 economic downturn*). The second downturn lasted seven quarters, from 2015Q2 to 2016Q4, the result of a sharp decline in the demand for and cost of natural resources such as coal, oil, and natural gas (referred to as the *2015 economic downturn* in this report).

The *2020 economic downturn* began in 2020Q2 and lasted at least through 2020Q4, the most recent period for which data were available when this report was written. The 2020 downturn was largely driven by job losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wyoming's leisure & hospitality industry was hit especially hard by the pandemic; average monthly employment dropped to a 20-year low in 2020Q2. However, the 2020 downturn was similar to the two previous downturns in that declining energy prices and employment also preceded this downturn: job losses in mining began before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2020Q4 marked the sixth consecutive quarter of over-the-year job losses.

The tables and figures referenced in this document are available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA\\_State\\_Plan\\_Tables\\_2022.pdf](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA_State_Plan_Tables_2022.pdf).

###### **i. Existing Demand Sectors and Occupations**

Industries are classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Broad sectors are given a two-digit NAICS code, such as mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21) and construction (NAICS 23). Within each two-digit sector are several three-digit subsectors, four-digit industries, five-digit detailed industries, and six-digit detailed national industries. For example, three subsectors are placed within mining: oil & gas extraction (NAICS 21), mining, except oil & gas (NAICS 22), and support activities for mining (NAICS 213). A variety of six-digit national detailed industries are found in each sector; for example, in construction are such detailed industries as new single-family housing construction (NAICS 236115), industrial building construction (NAICS 236210), and oil & gas pipeline construction (NAICS 237120).

More information about the NAICS structure is available at <https://www.census.gov/naics/?99967>.

Wyoming's economy is driven by the health of mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21). Economic expansion occurs when demand for and prices of oil, coal, and natural are high. Conversely, economic contraction occurs when demand for and prices of these resources wane.

As previously mentioned, Wyoming's recent economic downturns were all preceded by declining energy prices.

Overall, employment decreased from 277,115 in 2019 to 260,880 in 2020 (-16,235, or -5.9%; see Table 2). Job losses were seen in nearly all industry sectors, led by leisure & hospitality (-4,778, or -12.9%) and mining (-4,441, or -21.4%). These two industries combined accounted for 61.4% of all jobs lost in Wyoming; in other words, nearly two out of every three jobs lost were in mining or in leisure & hospitality.

While most industries experienced over-the-year declines in employment throughout 2020, some growth occurred at the subsector (three-digit NAICS) level. For this plan, *existing demand industries* were defined as those with employment levels increasing by 5% or more for two consecutive quarters (in this case, 2020Q3 and 2020Q4) based on R&P's Growing and Declining Industries Report for 2020Q4. Only subsectors with average quarterly employment sizes of 100 or more were included in this analysis. R&P identified five such existing demand industries that met these criteria (see Table 3): crop production (NAICS 111); building material & garden supply stores (NAICS 444); general merchandise stores (NAICS 452); couriers & messengers (NAICS 492); and national security & international affairs (NAICS 928).

Existing demand occupations were identified using the New Hires Job Skills Survey (*New Hires Survey*), conducted by R&P every quarter based on a sample of new hires. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about jobs that are filled in the state, such as occupation, typical job duties, wages and benefits, license and certification requirements, necessary job skills, employers' satisfaction with their new hires' skills, and more. By linking New Hires Survey data with several administrative databases, R&P can identify demographics of new hires, such as gender and age. New Hires Survey results are published annually and contain a wealth of information about the state's job and labor markets. For more information, please see <https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/newhires.htm>.

The most current New Hires Survey data available is from 2018, when Wyoming had 94,075 new hires. The majority of all new hires worked in occupations with no formal educational requirement (50.6%) or in occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent (31.2%); together, these two categories accounted for 81.8% of all new hires. The remaining 17,094 new hires (18.2%) worked in occupations that required some education beyond a high school diploma, from some college courses or a post-secondary certificate to a master's degree or doctoral degree.

Table 4 provides a list of the top five most frequently-occurring new hire occupations that require some post-secondary education in 2018. The occupations in Table 4 that require less than an associate's degree could be seen as *existing demand occupations* for which training could be completed relatively quickly. Occupations that require a post-secondary non-degree award (certificate) include truck drivers, bookkeeping, accounting & auditing clerks, nursing assistants, teaching assistants, and medical assistants.

## **ii. Emerging demand industry sectors and occupations**

Emerging demand industries and occupations were identified using R&P's most recent short-term industry and occupational projections for 2020Q1 to 2022Q1, available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY\\_ST\\_Projections\\_2020-2022.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY_ST_Projections_2020-2022.htm).

For the purposes of this state plan, R&P identified *emerging demand industries* as subsectors (three-digit NAICS) with projected growth of at least 5.0% and 20 jobs from 2020Q1 to 2022Q1. Six subsectors met these criteria to be considered emerging industries (see Table 5): crop production (NAICS 111); animal production (NAICS 112); building material & garden equipment & supplies dealers (NAICS 444); couriers & messengers (NAICS 492); warehousing & storage (NAICS 493); and ambulatory health care services (NAICS 621). Of these six subsectors, the most significant growth was projected for ambulatory health care services (469, or 4.6%) and building material & garden equipment & supplies dealers (162, or 4.9%).

For this unified state plan, R&P has listed 25 emerging demand occupations by identifying the top five occupations with the greatest number of projected openings from 2020 to 2022 for each educational requirement (see Table 6). Occupational projections include three types of openings: *growth* (new jobs), *exits* (persons leaving the workforce), and *transfers* (persons changing occupations).

The vast majority (72.7%) of openings are projected in occupations that require a high school diploma or less (see Figure 2). The occupations with the greatest number of total openings for this educational requirement included cashiers (2,219), retail salespersons (2,208), combined food preparation & serving workers (1,967), waiters & waitresses (1,876), and office clerks, general (1,422). Many of these occupations are relatively low-paying jobs with high turnover rates that are often found in industries such as retail trade and leisure & hospitality.

Occupations requiring some college and no degree or a post-secondary certificate accounted for 8.8% of all projected openings from 2020Q1 to 2022Q1. These included occupations such as heavy & tractor-trailer truck drivers (1,059 openings), nursing assistants (860), and bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks (613).

Occupations requiring an associate's degree made up 2.1% of all projected openings. Occupations in this category included preschool teachers, excluding special education (168 openings), forest & conservation technicians (126), paralegals & legal assistants (112), and computer network support specialists (61).

The second-largest group of projected occupations required a bachelor's degree (13.6% of all projected openings). The occupations in this category varied, with the greatest number of openings projected for general & operations managers (720), registered nurses (662), elementary school teachers, except special education (417), and accountants & auditors (348), among other occupations.

Occupations requiring a master's, doctoral, or professional degree accounted for just 2.8% of all projected openings. These included such occupations as educational, guidance, school, & vocational counselors (148 openings), lawyers (91), education administrators, elementary & secondary school (74), clinical, counseling, & school psychologists (71), and nurse practitioners (66).

A complete list of short-term projections of all occupations is available at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY\\_ST\\_Projections\\_2020-2022.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY_ST_Projections_2020-2022.htm)

## **B. Workforce Analysis.**

As noted, Wyoming has endured three periods of economic downturn over the last 12 years. To illustrate the effects that these downturns have had on the State's population and workforce, this analysis compares population estimates and data on persons working from different periods between 2010 and 2020. During that period, the population peaked at 586,389 in 2015, while the total number of persons working at any time peaked at 367,527 in 2014.

Wyoming's estimated resident population in 2020 was 582,328, down slightly compared to 2014 (-0.1%) but up over the year from 2019 (0.4%) and over the decade from 2010 (3.2%).

The changes in Wyoming's population and workforce are shown in Table 7 and illustrated in Figure 3. Note that during the 2009 economic downturn, Wyoming's population continued to grow, even though the number of persons working decreased. This suggests that although some Wyoming residents were not working, many stayed in the state since surrounding states also lost jobs during the national Great Recession. In contrast, during the 2015 economic downturn, the estimated population and number of persons working both decreased, suggesting that some Wyoming residents who lost jobs in 2015 and 2016 left the state.

The growing economies of neighboring states may have contributed to Wyoming's declining population in recent years. From 2015 to 2018, Wyoming's average annual rate of employment change was -1.1%. Conversely, all of Wyoming's neighboring states showed growth, with an average annual rate of employment changes ranging from 0.8% for Nebraska to 3.4% for Utah. Wyoming residents who were no longer working during the 2015 economic downturn may have been able to quickly find work in another state.

Table 8 and Figure 4 show how the 2015 economic downturn played a part in shaping Wyoming's population and workforce in recent years; in particular, a substantial decrease occurred in the younger segments of the workforce. For example, from 2014 to 2019, the population of individuals ages 20–24 decreased by 11.3% (4,712 persons), while the number working decreased by 15.3% (5,820 persons). These changes are consistent with previous research from R&P that demonstrated how younger male workers are the most likely to lose their jobs during times of economic downturn (Harris, 2013, and Moore, 2017).



The decrease in younger workers is also consistent with other documented behavior of the Millennial generation, the 66 million individuals born from 1981 to 1996 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Millennials were ages 18–33 in 2014 and made up 22.1% of the state's population and 33.1% of all persons working in Wyoming. In 2020, millennials were ages 24–39 and made up 20.8% of Wyoming's population and 30.8% of all persons working (Moore, in press).

Several studies have identified a trend of younger workers moving away from rural areas to larger metropolitan areas in recent years. Cromartie (2017), for example, noted that about 68% of rural counties lost population between 2010 and 2016, and Kumar (2018) stated that “rural areas lack academic and economic opportunity compared to metropolises.”

That trend may be changing, however. During the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020, millennials and other younger workers left larger cities for smaller, more rural areas (Frey, 2021). From 2016 to 2019, Wyoming's millennial population decreased by an average of 1.5% each year. From 2019 to 2020, the decrease was only 0.3% (Moore, in press).

Wyoming's millennial population decreased from 128,952 in 2014 to 121,261 in 2020 (-7,691, or -6.0%). The 6.0% decrease was the sixth-largest in the nation, behind Vermont (-9.3%), West Virginia (-7.3%), Mississippi (-7.1%), North Dakota (-6.8%), and Rhode Island (-6.4%; see Figure 5). Conversely, most of Wyoming's neighboring states experienced substantial growth in their millennial populations during that period, including Colorado (17.0%), Idaho (10.7%), Utah (4.8%), and Montana (4.0%). The total U.S. millennial population grew by 2.7%.

### **Individuals with Barriers to Employment and Special Populations**

Note: The data presented in this section on individuals with barriers to employment and special populations include data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The Census Bureau has collected a complete enumeration of the country's population every ten years since 1790, which is known as the decennial census. In more recent decades, the majority of the population was given the “short form” survey instrument, which only collected age, sex, and race, while a sample of the population was given the “long-form” of the survey, which also collected socioeconomic and housing data. In 2010, the Census Bureau replaced this long-form with the ACS, which collects similar data but is conducted yearly rather than once a decade. This yearly collection schedule allows the data to be released in a timelier manner, which is helpful to the entities that rely on Census data, such as federal, state, and local governments, and researchers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

The ACS is sent to approximately 3 million people across the nation per year. The results are released as one-year, three-year, and five-year estimates based on the number of years of data used to create the estimates. The one-year estimates are the most current, but are less accurate because the sample used to develop them is smaller. Accuracy increases as more data samples are added to the estimation process. The data used for this report are five-year estimates based on data collected between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2019. Five-year estimates are the most accurate of those released by the Census Bureau, especially for areas with smaller populations, such as Wyoming, or for studying population subgroups such as age groups or gender (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). For more information about the ACS, examples of the survey instrument, or instructions for filling out the survey, please visit <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>. The data used for this report is from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), provided by the University of Minnesota (Ruggles, Genadek, Goeken, Grover, and Sobek, 2015).

### **Poverty**

The U.S. government measures poverty in two ways. The first is referred to as the *poverty threshold*, which is updated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and used for statistical purposes, such as counting the number of people living in poverty. The second, known as *poverty guidelines*, is a simplified version of the poverty thresholds used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to administer specific federal programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These measurements of poverty vary based on the year and the number of people in the family or household. In 2019, an individual with an

income of up to \$13,011 or a family of four with an income of up to \$26,172 would be at or below the poverty threshold (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

As shown in Table 9, an estimated 13.1% of Wyoming residents, or 75,954 people, were at or below the poverty threshold in 2019. A sizable proportion of individuals younger than age 18 (13.4%) were at or below the poverty threshold. Substantial proportions of individuals ages 18–19 (38.6%) and 20–24 (30.9%) were at or below the poverty threshold; however, note that individuals in these two age groups make up a large proportion of individuals enrolled in college. Table 10 shows that a greater proportion of Wyoming females (14.0%) was at or below the poverty threshold than males (12.2%).

Table 11 contains data for the population who earned 130% of the poverty threshold, or 30% more than the poverty threshold. This would include an individual who earned up to \$16,914 in a year or up to \$34,024 for a family of four. In Wyoming, 17.2% of individuals had incomes within this range. Again, the highest concentration of these individuals were ages 18–19 (42.8%), 20–24 (36.3%), or younger than age 18 (18.5%). Table 12 shows that a greater proportion of females (18.4%) was at or below 130% of the poverty threshold than males (16.1%).

Table 13 contains the proportion of individuals whose earnings were within 160% of the poverty threshold. For a single person, this would be an income up to \$20,818, and for a family of four, this would be an income up to \$41,875. In Wyoming, 21.8% of all individuals had incomes within 160% of the poverty threshold. Nearly half (45.5%) of those aged 18–19 had incomes within this range, and 43.8% of those aged 20–24 had incomes within this range. Among individuals ages 65 or older, 20.3% of people had incomes up to 160% of the poverty threshold. Nearly one in four women (23.0%) had earnings within this range, compared to approximately one in five males (20.7%), as shown in Table 14.

### **Native American**

American Indians or Alaska Natives (referred to as Native American individuals for the purposes of this section) reside in all 23 Wyoming counties (see Table 15). Fremont County, where the Wind River Reservation is located, had the largest population (21.2%) in 2010, according to 2010 Decennial Census estimates (please note that these ACS data were not available, so Decennial Census estimates were used).

As shown in Table 16, nearly one-third (31.6%) of the state's Native American population was younger than age 18 in 2019, while approximately 18.1% were age 55 or older. Among Native Americans aged 16 or older, 52.3% were employed and working, 6.3% were unemployed, and 39.0% were not in the labor force (see Table 17).

### **Veterans**

The Census Bureau (2017a) defines *veterans* as individuals who served in any branch of the United States military during a time of war or peace, for any length of time, at home or abroad. Veterans who are ages 17 or older are included in the ACS statistics. As shown in Table 18, in 2019, 45,721 veterans lived in Wyoming, including active duty. The proportion of veterans increases with age. Only 1.5% of all veterans in Wyoming were younger than 25, while 44.5% were aged 65 or older.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (2015) assigns a disability rating to veterans who received a service-connected disability, defined as "an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service." This affects, among other things, an individual's eligibility and priority for medical services. Approximately 20.7% of the state's veterans have some degree of disability rating (see Table 19). The largest proportion had a disability rating of 10 to 20 percent (6.8%).

The degree of disability rating varied by age group. The largest proportion of individuals with a 70% disability rating or higher were ages 35–44 (7.6%), while 6.8% of veterans ages 55–64 had a disability rating of 10–20 percent. The largest proportion of veterans with some degree of disability rating were ages 45–54: one-fourth (24.1%) of veterans in this age group had some degree of the disability rating.

### **English Proficiency**

Table 20 contains data on the ability of individuals in Wyoming to speak English. In 2019, 93.1% of individuals

ages five or older indicated they spoke only English. Another 4.9% thought they spoke English very well, 1.2% thought they spoke English well, 0.7% thought they spoke English but not well, and only 0.1% indicated they did not speak English at all.

## **Disability**

The number and percent of people residing in Wyoming with a disability in 2019 can be found in Table 21. Disability, as defined by the Census Bureau (2017b), includes cognitive, ambulatory, independent living, self-care, vision, and hearing impairments. Although a person may have more than one type of disability, they are only counted once for the purposes of this section.

Overall, 14.8% of the population who were ages five or older had a disability. The proportion of people with a disability increased with age, from 5.6% of individuals ages younger than 18 to 37.2% of individuals ages 65 or older.

## **Youth**

Wyoming's estimated resident youth population (ages 15–19) declined slightly over the last decade, from 37,780 in 2010 to 36,898 in 2020 (-882, or -2.3%; see Table 22 and Figure 6). The decline in youth working in Wyoming at any time during the year was even greater, from 20,630 to 19,330 (-1,300, or -6.3%). The decline in youth working is especially noticeable during economic downturns, such as from 2015 to 2016 (-1,693, or -7.9%) and from 2019 to 2020 (-1,643, or -7.8%).

According to school district enrollment and staffing data from the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), fall enrollment for Wyoming's public schools steadily increased from 2010/11 to 2015/16 before declining slightly for the next two years (see Table 23 and Figure 7). From 2019/20 to 2020/21, fall enrollment decreased by 1,894, (-2.0%). Total fall enrollment peaked in 2015/16, with 94,002 students.

The WDE has used the Federal Four-Year Adjusted Cohort methodology established by the U.S. Department of Education since 2009/10. Wyoming's four-year (on-time) high school graduate rate mostly trended each year upward since 2014/15. According to WDE state and district graduation rate data, Wyoming's four-year high school graduation rate for 2019/20 was 82.3% (see Table 24 and Figure 8). Graduation rates varied by district (see Table 25); in 2019/2020, the lowest graduation rates were found in Fremont County #38 (26.3%), Fremont County #21 (36.4%), Niobrara County #1 (42.9%), and Fremont County #14 (53.9%). Washakie County #2 and Park County #16 both had graduation rates of 100.0%.

From 2010/11 to 2019/20, a total of 10,831 students from grades 9–12 dropped out of Wyoming public schools, according to WDE data (see Table 26 and Figure 9). From 2010/11 to 2019/20, the average number of dropouts per year was 1,083, with a high of 1,203 in 2012/13 and a low of 835 in 2019/20. As shown in Table 27 and Figure 9, male students accounted for 58.1% of all dropouts from 2010/11 to 2019/20, compared to 41.9% for female students. The total number of dropouts for 2019/20 by district is presented in Table 28.

Prior research from R&P has illustrated how Wyoming youth leave the state as they age. In *A Decade Later* (2012), Glover found that from 1992 to 2006, the average five-year retention rate for 18-year-olds with Wyoming as a primary state of wages was 55.8% (see Table 29). The average 10-year retention rate from 1992 to 2001 was just 43.8%. Data from R&P's Education: WE Connect project show similar five-year retention rates for Wyoming high school students and college completers. Of all high school seniors in 2006/07 and 2007/08, 57.7% were found working in Wyoming five years later (see Table 30). Five-year retention rates were similar for graduates from the University of Wyoming and the state's community colleges: 57.2% for those with academic degrees, 63.1% for individuals with occupational one-year degrees, and 60.0% for those with occupational two-year degrees (see Table 31). In fall 2021, R&P published *Another Decade Later: Tracking Wyoming's High School Seniors Into Post-secondary Education and the Labor Market*, which added to the previous research. This publication is available at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/Another\\_Decade\\_Later.pdf](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/Another_Decade_Later.pdf).

### **i. Employment and Unemployment**

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program provides estimates on the labor force (number of persons employed plus the number of persons unemployed) and the unemployment rate. Wyoming's labor

force steadily declined from 2012 to 2018 but increased each year in 2019 and 2020 (see Table 32 and Figure 10). In 2020, Wyoming's labor force was 296,801, down 1.7% (-5,092) compared to 2010. Wyoming's unemployment rate in 2020 was 5.8%, the highest since 2011 (6.2%). Wyoming had 17,339 unemployed individuals, more than during the previous downturn in 2016.

As Wyoming's population and labor force have declined, so has the state's labor force participation rate (see Figure 11). The *labor force participation rate* refers to the percentage of people ages 16–64 eligible to participate in the labor force who are actively participating in the labor force, either working or looking for work. Wyoming has historically had a somewhat higher labor force participation rate than the U.S., although both have declined in recent years. In 2020, Wyoming's average monthly labor force participation rate was 65.3%, slightly higher than the national average of 61.7%.

Wyoming experienced a record-high number of Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients and benefit payments in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic-related business closures and restrictions, along with declining energy prices. A total of 43,630 unemployed workers received UI benefits in Wyoming in 2020, up 231.9% from 13,144 in 2019 (see Table 33). In addition, more UI recipients exhausted their regular UI benefits (9,309 exhaustees in 2020 compared to 2,163 in 2019), and the benefit exhaustion rate increased from 16.5% to 21.3%. The higher number of exhaustees and exhaustion rate (the number of exhaustees divided by the number of UI recipients) indicates that reemployment was more difficult for people in 2020.

Table 34 shows that the highest UI benefit exhaustion rates were seen in individuals ages 65 and older (34.9%) and 55–64 (27.7%), while the lowest exhaustion rates were seen in younger workers ages 16–24 (15.0%) and 25–34 (19.3%). This indicates that older unemployed workers generally had more difficulty finding reemployment than younger individuals in Wyoming. In addition, men exhausted their benefits at a greater rate (24.6%) than women (19.5%).

Table 34 also shows that the higher wages an individual made before being laid off (total base period wages), the lower the UI exhaustion rate. A higher pre-layoff wage would make an individual qualify for more weeks of UI benefits. Recipients may receive UI benefits for a maximum of 26 weeks. The maximum benefit amount is \$508 per week. The more weeks of eligibility for UI benefits also was linked with a lower exhaustion rate, as more time allowed recipients to find a job before exhausting their benefits. For example, 17.3% of recipients who were eligible for 20–25 weeks in 2020 exhausted their benefits, compared to 33.0% of recipients who were eligible for 10–14 weeks.

## **ii. Labor Market Trends Across Industries**

This section discusses six selected industries identified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The industries discussed in this section are mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21), construction (NAICS 23), manufacturing (NAICS 31–33), retail trade (NAICS 44–45), health care & social assistance (NAICS 61), and leisure & hospitality (NAICS 71–72). Figure 12 shows employment trends in these industries from 2010 to 2020. The industries discussed in this section play a key role in Wyoming's economy. Quarterly data from the QCEW were used in the figures in this section to illustrate employment and wage changes.

### **Mining, Including Oil & Gas (NAICS 21)**

Historically, Wyoming's mining sector (NAICS 21) has contributed more wages to the state's total than any other private industry. In 2020, mining's \$1.5 billion in total wages made up 11.2% of the statewide total, and the 16,323 jobs in mining accounted for 6.3% of all jobs (see Table 35). The average annual wage in mining was \$90,849, notably higher than the statewide average of \$50,979.

Employment in Wyoming's mining industry decreased substantially over the last decade (see Figure 13). Average monthly employment fell from a decade high of 28,585 in 2011Q4 to 14,554 in 2020Q4, a decrease of 14,031 jobs, or 49.1%. In other words, Wyoming lost nearly half of its mining jobs over the last ten years. In 2020, employment in mining fell to its lowest point at any time since at least 2000Q1 (Research & Planning, 2021).

### **Construction (NAICS 23)**

In 2020, construction accounted for 8.1% of total employment with 21,204 jobs and 9.0% of the state's total

wages, with \$1.2 billion (see Table 36). The average annual wage in construction was \$56,627, greater than the statewide average of \$50,979.

Employment in Wyoming's construction sector (NAICS 23) varies by season. As shown in Figure 14, employment tends to be lowest in the winter months of the first quarter, then increases during the spring (second quarter) and peaks during the summer months (third quarter) before declining in the fall (fourth quarter).

Wyoming's construction sector endured a prolonged period of job losses in recent years, as average monthly employment declined from prior-year levels during each quarter from 2015Q1 to 2018Q3—more than three years (see Figure 14). That trend finally changed in 2018Q3 and 2018Q4, when average monthly employment increased compared to 2017Q3 and 2017Q4. The average monthly employment of 21,204 in 2020 was a 7.3% decrease compared to 2019.

### **Manufacturing (NAICS 31–33)**

The 9,577 jobs in Wyoming's manufacturing sector in 2020 represented 3.7% of the state's total employment (see Table 37). Manufacturing also contributed \$673.5 million in total wages or 5.1% of the statewide total.

Employment in manufacturing had been on an upward trend since 2017Q2 before declining in 2019Q3, with the downward trend continuing in 2020 (see Figure 15).

### **Retail Trade (NAICS 44–45)**

The 28,676 jobs in Wyoming's retail trade sector in 2020 represented 11.0% of Wyoming's total employment (see Table 38). Retail trade contributed \$909.9 million in total wages, 6.8% of the statewide total. The average annual wage of \$31,731 was substantially lower than the overall statewide average.

Retail trade experienced 17 quarters (more than four years) of over-the-year job losses from 2016Q2 to 2020Q2 before employment remained unchanged in 2020Q3 and increased in 2020Q4 (Moore, 2021; see Figure 16). Retail trade experienced the greatest over-the-year job growth of any industry in 2020Q4 and at any time during the pandemic.

### **Health Care & Social Assistance (NAICS 62)**

In 2020, Wyoming had 25,271 jobs in health care & social assistance, or 9.7% of all jobs in the state (see Table 39). The \$1.2 billion in total wages accounted for 8.9% of the state's total. The average annual wage was \$46,732, lower than the statewide average of \$50,979.

As seen in Figure 17, employment in health care & social assistance grew steadily over the last ten years. Employment peaked early in 2019 and dropped slightly in 2020. Wyoming's aging population contributes to the need for more health care workers. In addition, as noted by Gallagher *et al.* (2017), "Wyoming's health care industry has an older workforce. When the aging health care workers retire, possibly having greater health care needs themselves, the need for more health care workers in Wyoming grows." Research from R&P has shown that Wyoming's health care & social assistance sector has a high percentage of occupations requiring a bachelor's degree and a high percentage of individuals ages 55 or older (see Figure 19). As those individuals reach the traditional age of 65, Wyoming will need younger, educated individuals to fill those vacancies.

### **Leisure & Hospitality (NAICS 71–72)**

Wyoming's leisure & hospitality sector accounted for more jobs than any other private industry sector in 2020. The 32,264 jobs accounted for 12.4% of total employment in the state, and the \$743.5 million in total wages made up 5.6% of the statewide total (see Table 40). The average annual wage of \$23,044 in 2020 was noticeably lower than the statewide average of \$50,979.

Leisure & hospitality lost substantially more jobs than any other industry in Wyoming during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in 2020Q2. On March 20, a state health order called for the temporary closure of "schools, theaters, bars, nightclubs, coffee shops, employee cafeterias, self-serve buffets, salad bars, unpackaged self-serve food services, gyms, conference rooms and museums" (Gordon, 2020). Many of these business types are classified in the leisure & hospitality super-sector.

## Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

As shown in Table 41, a more significant proportion of Wyoming's population ages 25 and older graduated high school (93.4%) compared to the national average (88.0%), according to 2019 five-year estimates from the ACS. However, the proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher is lower in Wyoming (27.4%) than in the U.S. (32.0%). Wyoming also has a greater proportion of the population with some college and no degree (25.5% to 20.4%) and associate's degrees (11.3% to 8.5%) compared to the national average. This disparity between Wyoming and the national average may be due in part to the number of jobs that require a post-secondary certificate, as that information is not captured in ACS estimates.

These proportions were similar when comparing the state and national populations by gender. Among Wyoming women ages 25 and older, 93.7% were high school graduates, compared to 88.6% nationally, while 28.8% of Wyoming women ages 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 32.6% nationally. Additionally, 25.9% had some college and no degree, compared to 20.6% nationally, while an additional 12.9% had an associate's degree, compared to 9.3% nationally.

For men ages 25 and older, 93.1% in Wyoming were high school graduates, compared to 87.3% nationally. Among all Wyoming men ages 25 and older, 26.0% had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 31.5% nationally. A greater proportion of Wyoming men also possessed some college but no degree, compared to the national average (25.0% compared to 20.2%), and 9.8% had an associate's degree, compared to 7.6% nationally.

### iv. Skill gap

Educational attainment varies by industry. Table 42 shows the total number of persons working in Wyoming at any time in 2020 by industry, the percentage of those individuals 55 and older, and the percentage of individuals in the workforce with an associate's degree or bachelor's degree or higher as their highest level of education in 2019. An industry with a high percentage of individuals ages 55 and older and a high percentage of individuals with an associate's or bachelor's degree may indicate a training need or skills gap. As these older individuals age out of the workforce, employers need trained, skilled workers to replace them.

The data in Table 42 were used to create Figure 19, which illustrates the percentage of individuals ages 55 and older with the percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher by industry. In Figure 19, the size of the bubble represents the number of persons working in that industry; in other words, the larger the bubble, the more people working. In 2020, leisure & hospitality had the greatest number of people working (49,464); hence it is represented by the largest bubble. Conversely, the smallest bubble represents information, the industry with the fewest people working in Wyoming (3,473).

Across all industries in Wyoming, 20.6% of all persons working-aged 55 or older, and 29.7% had a bachelor's degree or higher. The upper right-hand area in Figure 19 indicates six industries that had higher than average proportions of older workers and persons with a bachelor's degree or higher: educational services, public administration, financial activities, health care & social assistance, information, and professional & business services. Long-term investments in education and training may be required to fill vacancies in these industries as educated individuals age out of the workforce.

Educational services had the highest percentage of persons 55 or older (27.1%) and persons with a bachelor's degree or higher (65.1%). In other words, more than one in four individuals working in educational services will reach the traditional retirement age of 65 within the next ten years, and almost two-thirds had a bachelor's degree or higher.

## 1. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

- A. **The State's Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional One-Stop Delivery System partners.**

## **Workforce development and One-Stop Delivery System Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs**

Wyoming's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs are administered by the Program Strategy Team housed within the Policy, Research, and Communications Division and operationalized by the Employment and Training Division, Office of Workforce Programs, Department of Workforce Services (DWS or The Department). Most of the direct assistance to employers and individuals is provided through the American Job Centers, as part of the American Job Center system. In this plan, the terms are used interchangeably. The American Job Centers, which are located throughout Wyoming, use a One-Stop concept that coordinates services with services available through partner organizations in a single location, where possible.

Wyoming realizes the importance of aligning a wide range of publicly and privately-funded education, employment, and training programs while also providing high-quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses through the One-Stop Delivery System. A job-driven workforce development and service-delivery system links the State's diverse talent pool with a specific employer and business needs. One-Stop Centers continue to be a valuable community resource and an important source of assistance for individuals looking for work or incumbent workers looking for opportunities to advance their careers. Wyoming continually aligns workforce, education, and economic development with regional in-demand jobs. This reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for One-Stop Centers to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to obtain and retain good jobs. The centers also help businesses find new skilled workers and provide ongoing education and training opportunities to upgrade the skills of their current workers.

All American Job Centers throughout Wyoming are required to offer basic career services, individualized career services, and training services for Wyoming's adult, dislocated worker, and youth workforces. Such people include veterans, public assistance recipients, individuals with disabilities, older workers, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, unemployed and underemployed workers, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act certified workers, and anyone else needing assistance. WIOA, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Wagner-Peyser services, and National Emergency Grant programs, when used, are provided through the Employment and Training Division by merit-based public employees, in coordination with other organizations both within the American Job Centers and the communities they serve.

Basic Career Services are offered to workers through the Wagner-Peyser program, which is available in person and electronically through Wyoming's MIS, Wyoming at Work. In-person services include assistance with job registration through Wyoming at Work, resume preparation and repository, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. The priority of service, enforced through federal and state policies, will be provided at all centers.

Staff-assisted services, including WIOA individualized career services and training, are also offered at the American Job Centers. These services are coordinated with other programs, both within and outside of the American Job Centers, for clients' benefit. Through the centers, workers also have access to the full array of other services provided by DWS, including access to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system.

The Department uses workforce information, including economic and labor market data provided via its Research & Planning section, for planning and decision making. This information is critical in determining the Department's target industries/occupations, in working with DWS' partners in business and education, and for ensuring appropriate matching of job openings and skills development.

Partner programs and organizations are jointly responsible for Wyoming's economic development and collaborate to create a seamless, customer-focused workforce development and One-Stop Delivery System. This integrated service-delivery system enhances access to a variety of educational, training, and workforce programs, all having a common goal of an economically self-sufficient workforce for Wyoming. Five of the six core programs are co-located under the Department as required by WIOA and include the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. Many locations also include other partner programs such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program, Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Trade Adjustment Act program (TAA), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, OSHA, Workers'

Compensation, and Job Corps. The sixth core program, Adult Education, is administered by the Wyoming Community College Commission and is available virtually, via telephone, and through referrals at the One-Stops. All six core programs and many partner programs make up the One-Stop Delivery System in Wyoming.

DWS has skilled Workforce Specialists located at 20 American Job Centers statewide. These offices provide customers with detailed labor market information necessary to make educated decisions regarding their educational needs, training opportunities, and career goals. Additionally, a statewide system of resources and referral provides:

- Well-equipped resource rooms at each American Job Center that features computers with resume writing software, various books and videos on resume writing and interviewing, college catalogs, typing and spelling tests, and other resource materials;
- Regularly scheduled cost-free workshops at the American Job Centers for resume writing, interviewing techniques, job seeking tips, online job searching, and more;
- Interest and aptitude assessment tools for career exploration;
- Job training programs that assist with the cost of additional education and job training for individuals who need to obtain or upgrade skills to enter self-sufficient employment;
- Referrals to the Adult Education program for individualized and group instruction in literacy for eligible learners. Areas of study are reading, writing, language, math, and computer skills. English literacy instruction and civics classes are also available for non-English speaking adults and people pursuing U.S. citizenship;
- High School Equivalency Certificate testing centers administered through the Wyoming Community College Commission are responsible for administering high school equivalency tests to youth and adults; and
- Referrals to Wyoming's community colleges, the University of Wyoming, Registered Apprenticeship, and other vocational training programs.

### **Adult and Dislocated Worker programs**

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in conjunction with Wagner-Peyser employment services, are the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career services to meet the diverse needs of adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Under WIOA, adults and dislocated workers may access career and training services. Training is supported via the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), comprised of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Wyoming also provides enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and customized training.

Three categories of career services are available to adult and dislocated worker customers:

#### **Basic career services**

Basic career services are available to all individuals in the One-Stop Delivery System and include:

- Eligibility determination of whether an individual meets the program qualifications;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the State's worker profiling and reemployment services for unemployment insurance claimants), and orientation to information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System;
- Initial assessment of literacy and mathematical skill levels including English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and, when appropriate, career counseling, including the provision of information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and information about nontraditional employment opportunities;



- Performance information and program cost information about eligible training services providers by program and type of provider;
- Information on local area performance accountability measures, and additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System;
- Information relating to supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care, child support, medical or child health assistance, benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance, assistance under the State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services provided through those programs;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for training and education programs;
- Information and assistance filing claims under Unemployment Insurance programs; and
- Labor exchange services, which, as the primary services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff, fall under the basic career services mentioned above.

### **Individualized career services**

Individualized career services are made available when a determination is made that more customized services are needed for an individual to obtain or retain employment. One-Stop Center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. Individualized career services may include:

- Comprehensive, aptitude, and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing, use of other assessment tools, and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve their employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning and case management for ongoing career pathways strategies to enhance the participant's success;
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experience are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical-thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, and ultimately employment;
- Financial literacy services encompass information and activities on topics that include checking accounts, creating a budget, establishing and maintaining credit, and identity theft;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs; and
- Supportive services to assist clients with barriers to job search and training activities to reach employment and/or post-secondary goals.

### **Follow-up services**

Follow-up services are provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Follow-up services may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional career planning and counseling;
- Contact with the participant's employer, including assistance with work-related problems;
- Peer support groups;
- Information about additional educational opportunities; and
- Referral to supportive services available in the community.

### **Employment status determination**

In addition to providing career and training services to unemployed individuals, a population of job seekers remains who are underemployed. Underemployed individuals may include:

- Individuals employed less than full-time who seek full-time employment;
- Individuals who are employed in positions that are inadequate considering their skills and training;
- Employed individuals who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Sec. 3(36); and
- Individuals who are employed but whose current earnings are insufficient compared to their previous jobs.

Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and are considered a priority population may be eligible to receive career and training services under the Adult Program. Individuals who are eligible for the Dislocated Worker Program and are underemployed may still be considered eligible for career and training services.

### **Training services**

No sequence of service requirements has been established for career services and training; One-Stop Center staff may determine appropriate training regardless of whether or not the individual has received basic or individualized career services first. Training services may be provided if the staff determines, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the selected program of training services.

Training services, when determined appropriate, are provided through an individual training account or via a training contract. Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region, or in a geographical area to which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. Training services selection is conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, is informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and is coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)).

Individual training accounts are the primary method used for procuring training services. However, in certain circumstances, a contract for training services may be developed instead of an individual training account as explained under WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii); the complete list of exceptions is provided below;

- On-the-job training, which may include placing participants in a Registered Apprenticeship program, customized training, incumbent training, or transitional jobs (WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5));
- If the State Board determines that an insufficient number of eligible providers of training services are available to use individual training accounts;

- If a training service program of demonstrated effectiveness is offered in a local area by a community-based organization or other private organization;
- If the State Board determines that the most appropriate training could be provided by an institution of higher education to train multiple individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations.; and
- If the State Board determines a pay-for-performance contract is the most effective means of providing training services.

### **Work-based training Registered Apprenticeship**

Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers. Apprenticeship is most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. As Registered Apprenticeship programs, they automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:

- Employers who provide related instruction;
- Employers who use an outside educational provider;
- Joint apprenticeship training programs; and
- Intermediaries.

Additional details of the Registered Apprenticeship Program, including the expansion of registered apprenticeships, will be provided later in this plan.

### **On-the-job training**

On-the-job training continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. Wyoming provides up to 50% of the wage rate of the participant to employers for training costs while the participant is in the program. The expectation is the employer will retain the worker upon training completion.

### **Incumbent worker training**

Incumbent worker training is carried out through Wyoming's Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) program. The American Job Centers promote this program and, in coordination with WDTF staff, refer employers to the application portal after they have registered in the online job-matching system. The program offers training to new and incumbent workers that can help the employer remain competitive in the economy. Wyoming also intends to implement Incumbent Worker Training options for Rapid Response efforts to assist with layoff aversion and rapid reemployment services that complement the Wyoming Workforce Development Training Fund program.

### **Transitional jobs**

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100%. These jobs can be in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, and are offered in combination with comprehensive career and supportive services.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers are tasked with using the Transitional Jobs with targeted groups, such as the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and individuals with disabilities (WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5)).

### **Priority populations**

Wyoming focuses on serving individuals with barriers to employment, defined in WIOA Sec. 3(24), and seeks to ensure access to these populations as a priority. The priority populations are discussed below and in other sections of this plan.

One-Stop Center staff must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are English language learners or Basic Skills Deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. Department of Labor-funded job-training programs, which include WIOA programs. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who have basic skills deficiencies receive top priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds;
- To non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult funds;
- To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups; and
- To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

The definition of dislocated workers has been expanded to include military spouses who have lost employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in the duty station of the spouse. Military spouses may also qualify if they are a dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a call or order to active duty, a permanent change of station, or the service-connected death or disability of the service member. Military spouses can also qualify if they are unemployed or underemployed and are experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment (WIOA Sec. 3(15)(E) and 3(16)(A) and (B)).

Wyoming has established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described above. Those populations are served in the WIOA Adult program.

### **Supportive services and needs-related payments**

Wyoming has established written policies and procedures to ensure coordination with other entities to provide the highest quality, most comprehensive service provision possible while preventing duplication of resources and services; this includes established limits on the amount and duration of these services.

Supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

- Transportation;
- Child and dependent care;
- Licensing and fees;
- Tools, Uniforms, and Clothing;
- Housing; and/or
- Needs-related payments, which are only available to unemployed individuals enrolled in training services.

### **Coordination with Trade Adjustment Assistance**

Co-enrollment of workers certified eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) with the Dislocated Worker Program allows for the timely provision of individualized career services and improves the effectiveness of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Barriers to service delivery are eliminated while capitalizing on all of the resources available in the One-Stop Delivery System. As trade-impacted workers formulate their reemployment plans, if additional career services are required, One-Stop staff can coordinate services provided by both programs to maximize the benefits available.

## **Other activities**

As permitted by WIOA, some flexibility is possible when providing services with Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds. In addition to the required career and training services, Wyoming will use funds to provide additional job-seeker services and business services and to facilitate enhanced coordination between partner programs and entities at state and local levels.

Wyoming will use these funds to ensure the provision of robust services for businesses through the workforce system. These activities include:

### **Jobseeker services**

- Customer support to enable individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities and veterans) to navigate among multiple services and activities;
- Work support activities for low-wage workers, in coordination with One-Stop Center partners, to provide opportunities for those workers to retain or enhance employment;
- Improved linkages between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance programs;
- Improved coordination between employment and training activities and programs for individuals with disabilities. This includes programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, as well as other activities undertaken by the statewide Independent Living Council, and activities carried out by centers for independent living;
- Training programs for displaced homemakers and individuals training for nontraditional occupations, in conjunction with programs operated in the local area;
- Employment and training activities coordinated with child support enforcement activities of State agencies carrying out part D of Title IV of the Social Security Act; and
- Career services availability that includes local labor market information for maximizing job search, resume and cover letter writing assistance, mock interview preparation and skills, career interests for career pathway exploration, and much more.

### **Employer services**

- Customized recruitment screening and referral of qualified applicants to employers;
- Customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations;
- Activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce development needs of area employers, as determined by the local area, which includes industry-driven partnerships;
- Coordination of activities for employers for assistance with writing job descriptions, pre-screening applicants, labor market research, and interviewing services, which includes resource rooms;
- Employment and training activities in coordination with cooperative extension programs carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture;
- Employment and training activities coordinated with activities that facilitate remote access to services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System, which includes access through the use of technology;
- Improving coordination between workforce development activities and economic development activities;
- Promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;
- Improving services and links between the local Workforce Development System and employers, including small employers, in local areas; and

- Other Federal agencies supported workforce development initiatives under the departments of Transportation, Energy, Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Health and Human Services, and Defense.

### **Rapid Response**

The Rapid Response Program is designed to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities, which includes layoff aversion services. Wyoming's system may include:

- Information and direct reemployment services for workers, including, but not limited to: Information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and support for filing petitions, information on the impacts of layoffs on health coverage or other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment focused workshops and services, and training services, which includes Adult Education Program activities;
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition provided across the business lifecycle, including comprehensive business engagement. Strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize layoffs are also available;
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating connections, networks, and partners to assist dislocated workers and their families, such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial literacy; and
- Strategic planning data gathering and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

As mandated by WIOA Sec. 134(a)(2)(A), Rapid Response activities are carried out by the Department of Workforce Services, as designated by the State, in conjunction with local areas and other stakeholders. Wyoming has established a Rapid Response unit to carry out statewide Rapid Response activities and oversee such activities undertaken for affected local areas. Business engagement is emphasized in required outreach for early intervention strategies to assist during various stages of the business cycle. A strategy to carry out Rapid Response activities will be expanded in Wyoming with a new mobile Rapid Response unit. This will enhance business engagement and layoff aversion strategies to strengthen Wyoming's economy.

### **Youth Program**

Wyoming's Youth Program supports an integrated service-delivery system that provides a framework through which DWS can leverage other federal, state, and local resources to support both in-school and out-of-school youth. Partnerships are committed to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with employment along a career pathway. Employers are critical partners who provide meaningful growth opportunities for young people through work experiences, internships, and pre-apprenticeships in real-world settings, and ultimately, jobs young people are ready to fill if given the opportunity.

#### **Recruiting out-of-school youth**

The Department of Workforce Services takes a customized approach when delivering youth services throughout Wyoming. A major goal is to establish partnerships that support the Youth Services Program and continue to strengthen relationships to ensure WIOA program services are effectively provided.

Several methods can be used to reach out-of-school youth; however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be effective. The One-Stop Center staff must be visible in the community and meet youth outside of traditional service delivery locations—parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, emergency food programs, and homeless shelters could assist the One-Stop Centers with recruitment efforts.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will work to enhance partnerships with other State agencies, including the

Department of Family Services, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and with community partners, high schools, and businesses to increase youth opportunities.

Even with the WIOA focus on serving more out-of-school youth, DWS cannot forget the importance of maintaining positive relationships with the local high schools. Many high schools have Dropout Prevention Counselors, and through this relationship, the WIOA program is available to reach out to those students who may drop out.

The One-Stop Centers will continue to foster relationships with the Job Corps Program. All Job Corps students are considered out-of-school youth. The WIOA Youth program and Job Corps partnership provides many benefits by maximizing the levels of services provided to youth in local communities. Such relationships produce efficiencies and impacts that neither program could produce independently. Additional positive potential outcomes from strengthening the partnership with Job Corps are:

- **Coordinating referrals:** Job Corps are strongly encouraged to refer students to One-Stop Centers and the WIOA Youth program to enhance placement and follow-up activities;
- **Opportunities to continue developing and strengthening linkages for recruitment and placement:** Both the WIOA Youth program and Job Corps are required partners, and local area coordination has begun. The benefit of this partnership is to reach youth who may not currently be served and to reduce recruitment and placement costs through improved cooperation and information sharing. Job Corps and WIOA Youth programs shall co-sponsor hiring or outreach events to reduce the cost and increase the scale of their placement and recruitment efforts; and
- **Promoting information-sharing between programs:** WIOA Youth Committees and Job Corps Workforce Councils can work together to determine how to ensure that local labor market data and other valuable information can be regularly exchanged.

By working together, both the Job Corps and WIOA Youth programs can align education and training with the needs of employers to help youth attain relevant certifications, connect successfully to work, and advance to higher levels of education.

### **Transitioning in-school youth**

Wyoming has fewer resources under WIOA that are devoted to in-school-youth; however, Wyoming has elected to continue to serve this population. The most significant change is that One-Stop Centers do not provide targeted outreach efforts to gain program enrollment for in-school youth. WIOA places heightened emphasis on coordination and collaboration at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure a streamlined and coordinated service delivery system for all job-seekers, including youth. The staff within the One-Stop Centers are trained to deliver Wagner-Peyser basic career services and collaborate with other core partners, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and to make appropriate referrals.

### **Program elements**

Wyoming will continue to make all program elements available to youth participants by focusing on supporting youth and young adults through an integrated service-delivery system. This vision includes high-quality services for in-school and out-of-school youth, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, and opportunities for skills training, culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education.

The program elements will be included in the development of the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The One-Stop staff members will develop the ISS based on the needs of each youth participant and update the plan as needed. The ISS and the 14-program elements within the participant's plan are a result of the objective assessment.

### **The 14-Program Elements are:**

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery

strategies that lead to the completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential;

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences;
4. Occupational Skills Training;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership Development Opportunities;
7. Supportive Services as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(59);
8. Adult Mentoring;
9. Follow-up Services;
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling;
11. Financial Literacy Education;
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training;
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

#### **Expanded work experience focus**

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers staff members understand the significance of work experience opportunities. Many work experiences serve as a stepping stone to unsubsidized employment and are an important step in developing a career pathway filled with many career exploration opportunities. WIOA includes a significant focus on providing youth with work experience opportunities, to include a requirement that a minimum of 20% of the funds must be spent on work experience activities.

For young people, work experiences provide an opportunity for career exploration and skill development. Employers are critical partners that provide meaningful growth opportunities for young people. These work experiences allow young people to learn and apply skills in real-world settings that may ultimately lead to jobs.

One-Stop staff, including Workforce Specialists and Business Representatives, will work together to leverage established relationships and strengthen outreach efforts to employers and youth.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the program, an individual must be considered an in-school or out-of-school youth.

An in-school youth is an individual who is:

- Attending school;
- Not younger than 14 or older than 21;
- Meets the low-income requirement; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - Basic skills deficient;
  - An English language learner;



- An offender;
- A homeless youth or runaway;
- In foster care or “aged out” of the foster care system;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- A young person with a disability;
- An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (State Barriers), which includes:
  - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy,
  - Youth in a single-parent family,
  - Remoteness (Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less, which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000,
  - Limited English proficiency,
  - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19–24 years old),
  - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

Eligibility criteria are related to Wyoming’s State barriers for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough In-School Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understand a waiver exception would need to be completed before enrollment.

An out-of-school youth is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school;
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at the time of enrollment; and who has
- One or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recently completed school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - A homeless individual;
  - a runaway;
  - an individual who is in foster care or who has aged out of the foster-care system;
  - a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 677);
  - or an individual who is in an out-of-home placement;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - An individual with a disability;
  - A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes the following state barriers:
    - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy,

- Youth in a single-parent family,
- Remoteness,
- Limited English proficiency,
- Lacks employability skills (only youth 19-24 years old), and/or
- Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health condition.

Eligibility criteria are related to Wyoming's State barriers for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understands that a waiver exception would need to be completed before enrollment.

#### Adult Education Workforce Activities

Activities	Educational Activities	Gaps
Career Pathways Plan	Local Adult Education (AE) instructors have completed Career Pathways (CP) training for AE certification. Local CP plans and service delivery models have begun as Next Generation Sector Partnerships identified needs for high in-demand jobs in the state.	Partnerships need to be strengthened. Pathways still do not fully exist or are not accessible to clients across the entire state. Sector Partnerships have formed but are not fully operational in all areas of the state.
Sector Partnerships	Each AE program participates on an as-needed basis in a Sector Partnership to help guide WIOA activities.	Service areas are not in sync for core partners, and some areas are slow to engage all partners and AE.
Integrated Education & Training (IET)	IETs were piloted in State AE programs by a few local providers. Extensive training and technical assistance are forming the backdrop for IET expansion in Wyoming.	IET pilot projects were not successful because of Wyoming's very rural nature. Local community colleges are slow to provide any type of integrated training models with AE. Vocational instructor and tuition costs are challenges to IET enrollments.
Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education (IELCE)	Wyoming has one IELCE program that is struggling as students are not completing all requirements.	IELCEs are very difficult to run in rural states like Wyoming. Program challenges include lower language abilities of some participants, an inability to obtain transcripts from their native country to enroll in the training component, and work/family commitments.
Career Services	Each AE program has a required career services course that all enrolled participants must complete. Course components may include career explorations / pathways, employment interest, aptitude assessments, FAFSA completions, and review of enrollment processes for post-secondary education, learning styles inventory, participatory learning, disability services, PowerPath, NRS assessments, and employability skills.	Programs are currently modifying their Career Services courses to include hybrid and virtual courses.
Transition to Post-secondary	All programs have a transition class to prepare adults to transition to college. Some programs have begun to develop intensive Bridge programs that provide intensive skill-based training.	Need to enhance communication between the community colleges and local providers.

Activities	Educational Activities	Gaps
Transition to Employment	Employability skills (social capital skills) are embedded in all AE classes using participatory learning strategies. AE students register in DWS' MIS, Wyoming at Work. Cross-training of core partner staff has occurred, which has helped develop a more comprehensive understanding of core program services.	Need to enhance communication and improve referral processes so that participants receive the comprehensive services needed for success.
Workplace Adult Education and Literacy	At least one local provider is piloting this type of activity with a local employer to retrain employees. Contextualized instruction is provided using workplace-authentic materials to improve workplace productivity.	Finding an employer in need of the AE programs is difficult. Stronger partnerships with local DWS offices are needed so AE can align programming to the needs of local employers.
High School Equivalency Certificate Completion	HiSET and GED are offered statewide as a pathway to complete high school equivalency. The choice of tests is given to the student. Instruction is geared toward College and Career Readiness standards and prepares students for either test.	Each year the HiSET test becomes more advanced, forcing AE programs to upgrade instruction to the highest standards identified in the CCRS.
Corrections & Other Institution	Corrections education is provided in jails, prisons, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.	Transitional planning between DOC and the public AE program is still very limited. More integrated training and communication is needed; work is underway to develop a pre-apprenticeship program in plumbing in at least one Wyoming correctional facility
Bridge Programs	Increasing numbers of providers are beginning to offer contextualized bridge programs that align with post-secondary career tracks.	Bridge programming is not fully recognized by some colleges as an allowable AE activity. Providers are currently addressing this with local post-secondary institutions. Wyoming does not have a full alignment of AE courses with readiness to enter college. Programs still need to work with colleges to either establish or expand programs that train individuals in the occupations most needed by businesses.

**(A) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) directly above.**

Strengths of workforce development activities include:

- Program diversity to meet complex needs;
  - Customized training and services to meet the needs of job seekers and employers;
- Momentum in collaborative efforts;
- Leverage resources in very remote parts of the state and collaborative community relationships;
- Provide support and encouragement to staff;
  - Pull together when others need help;
  - Celebrate positive outcomes or staff achievements;
  - Support learning and growth;
  - Create a family-oriented environment; and

- Develop good relationships with our most vulnerable populations.

Weaknesses of workforce development activities include:

- A negative image is associated with the workforce system;
  - “Unemployment office;”
  - Do it by law or get a fine;
  - Adult Education is not GED;
- Lack of training;
  - Lack of understanding of other program work from a global perspective;
  - Lack of leadership and supervisory training;
  - Succession planning;
  - Peoples’ first language;
  - Comfort working with a diverse client base;
- Difficulty convincing adults to take advantage of opportunities to pursue skill-up training and certifications;
- Problems overcoming burdens placed by WIOA on the One-Stop System by the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and the application of a one-size-fits-all law;
- Lack of ability to track and address the needs of a locally- and nationally-growing remote workforce;
  - Currently, no available programs address the unique challenges of this growing sector of the workforce;
  - Difficult for R&P to count and classify the metrics pertaining to this segment of Wyoming’s workforce; and
  - Lack of training available to One-Stop staff to assist dislocated or otherwise unemployed workers with identifying opportunities in this marketplace.

Wyoming’s Adult Education Program staff has been proactive in determining the approach taken to train local staff in educational standards and the implementation of career pathways. Local program staff members were trained on how to implement the College and Career Readiness standards in classrooms. With the completed training, programs now include lesson plans/maps that integrate the CCRS. A Standards in Action checklist is also used in all local programs as an evaluation tool to measure how effectively the standards are implemented. Local program staff members are developing integrated education and training models and/or pre-apprenticeships for the most in-demand industries in various regions around the State in conjunction/with assistance from the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. All AE providers have completed a recertification process in PowerPath that incorporates a five-step process from engagement to instruction, with steps that work together to build personal insight into the understanding and practice of overcoming personal challenges. This recertification allows AE instructors to easily identify learning challenges that some participants may face and offer tools to help them overcome difficulties that may prevent them from being successful in the workforce. Instructors have also recertified in Participatory Learning, particularly for use in virtual classrooms.

Several years ago, all AE providers implemented a Start Smart course, now titled Career Services. This front-loaded course introduces students to post-secondary education requirements for enrollment and successful completion while providing them with the tools they need to be successful on the job. Participants complete a career exploration component with the integration of digital literacy and soft skills training. All providers have integrated basic academic and employability skills into instruction, including critical thinking skills, digital literacy, and self-management. Activities include competencies in using resources, integrating information,

working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment.

Innovations by the core partners have been inspired by cooperative planning processes through Next Generation Sector Partnerships, employers, and other stakeholders. These innovations have directly resulted from significant changes and realignments over the past couple of years. Changes in the economy are causing unemployed adults to need up-skilling, larger numbers of immigrants residing in the State, the significant achievement gap of minority students in reading and math, and the non-completers from high schools. The workforce is changing, and new technologies now require higher skill sets. The State is making substantial strides in attempting to upscale and educate Wyoming residents to address future workforce needs. In-state initiatives demonstrate the State's efforts to upscale educational efforts and train the population.

- **Next Generation Sector Partnerships:** The Wyoming Workforce Development Council entered into an agreement to launch Next Generation Sector Partnership projects around the State in an effort to grow critical economic sectors and to form an alignment among many education, workforce training, economic development, and government partners;
- **Talent Transition:** The Wyoming Talent Transition Project will launch an outreach campaign to create a larger flow of adults seeking career changes to growing occupations and industries and to increase the ability of the workforce and education systems not only reach new populations, but also work together to help people receive the skills they need to transition to new jobs and careers in growing industries. especially those with Next Gen Partnerships. While many of Wyoming's Next Gen Partnerships have already helped inform the development of new education and training programs, and stronger connections among the workforce and education systems, as this outreach campaign increases the flow of interested jobseekers and career-changers, both systems will need to scale up their collaboration, working closely with industry. The overarching goal of the Wyoming Talent Transition Initiative is to help companies, workers, and communities benefit immediately, but also to demonstrate how Wyoming's state government and local institutions can work with the private sector to advance the economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

Progress will be assessed by evaluating the following:

- Increasing number of jobseekers and other transitioning workers successfully placed in careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
  - Increasing number of people who enter into retraining or education to qualify for new careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
  - Decreasing number of unfilled job openings in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
  - Increasing diversification of the Wyoming economy as health care, manufacturing, and construction have access to the talent to grow and become a larger share of the State's economy; and
  - Increasing incomes for Wyoming workers who make the transition to careers in growing industries.
- **Educational Attainment Initiative:** The EAI aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable post-secondary credential to 67% by 2025; and
  - **Perkins V:** Perkins V represents an important opportunity to expand opportunities for every student to explore, choose, and follow career and technical education programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials of value (federal program).

State and Federal Appropriations for Grant Programs include:

- **Wyoming Works:** 2019 State legislation to provide grants:

- to adult students to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment; and
- to Wyoming community colleges to develop stackable credential programs and other in-demand credential programs of study.
- **Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Training Fund:**
  - Business Training Grant connects employers with professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment;
  - Pre-hire grants focus on creating a trained workforce for a specific Wyoming industry;
  - Pre-obligation grants set-aside funds for large relocation or expansion projects for Wyoming businesses; and
  - Apprenticeship grants provide funding to develop industry-specific workforce businesses / industries with a shortage of skilled workers.

WIOA defines 'youth' as a person who is 16–24 years of age. The One-Stop Centers collaborate with the Adult Education Centers to provide opportunities for intensive instruction for the HSEC, additional career exploration, and job readiness skills. Additional services within the 14-Program Elements may be offered based on the youth participant's needs. Services are offered through established programs in the more densely populated areas of the state and include BOOST, SCOPE, A.S.P.I.R.E, Adulting 101, and Leading Youth Forward Everyday (LYFE) programs. Expansion of these youth programs is occurring in various areas of the State with large youth populations. In other areas of the state, the Adult Education Centers still provide the services (tutoring, soft skills, career services, and classroom instruction) to help WIOA youth participants obtain the HSEC, accomplished through established classes at AE.

With WIOA, stipends are an allowable payment for youth participation in classroom activities and other planned activities. A stipend is usually a set amount given for participation in an activity. This compensation can be given out in equal payments over a defined period. The case file must contain documentation of the activity or goal that must be achieved to result in a stipend.

The WIOA Program also allows incentive payments to youth participants for recognition and achievement directly tied to the educational activity. For example, if the participant meets a specific benchmark on testing or the participant obtains the HSEC, an incentive could be paid if an agreement is in place.

The past five years have seen significant progress in reversing Wyoming's downward trend in high school graduation rates. Statistics released from the Wyoming Department of Education indicate an 82.3% completion rate for FY 2019/20. This correlates to lower enrollments in Adult Education, indicating diversification in Adult Education programming is needed. WIOA core partners view this as an opportunity to expand services and to produce better alignment to statewide initiatives in providing training to create a better-equipped workforce. If the State is to meet its own workforce goals and objectives, advanced training components must be made available to non-traditional students.

Training means 'education,' and many of the participants served by core partners lack the funds to complete a training program and/or post-secondary education. Wyoming has approached this challenge in several ways.

1. Wyoming's Hathaway Scholarships are designed to provide an incentive for Wyoming students to prepare for and pursue post-secondary education within the state. The program offers four merit scholarships, each with specific eligibility requirements. A need-based scholarship supplements merit awards for eligible students. This program is a strong state effort to increase educational attainment while investing in long-term economic diversification. The Wyoming Department of Education administers the Hathaway Scholarship Program.
2. In 2019, the Wyoming State legislature passed a bill to allocate \$5 million in grant funds to the Wyoming Works program. Grant funds can be used by qualified adult students to pay for training that leads to better jobs and wages in the state. The program makes available individual grants for students

enrolling in approved programs at a Wyoming community college. It also provides a mechanism for colleges to apply for resources that could support the creation of high-demand programs.

3. The Wyoming community colleges have formed strong partnerships with local high schools to offer dual and concurrent enrollment to students who intend to pursue education/training beyond the secondary level. In 2017/18, the state saw its highest community college enrollments as more than 20% of graduating seniors had earned post-secondary credits before graduating from high school. Non-traditional concurrently enrolled students at some of Wyoming's community colleges are, in some instances, qualifying for federal financial aid under the 'Ability to Benefit' clause.

Qualified students on a career track are able to complete a course of study in Adult Education while concurrently enrolling in CTE programs of study at the community colleges. To fund this type of program, some community colleges have created five or six credit tuition scholarship programs to help ease the financial burden. In other instances, DWS and/or DVR is able to provide financial assistance to fund the initial six-credit Perkins 'Ability to Benefit' clause requirement. The Wyoming Community College Commission has issued clear guidance to both the community colleges as well as to local AE centers on how the 'Ability to Benefit' clause should be implemented in Wyoming to ensure that Adult Education students have the means to apply for federal financial aid to attend post-secondary education while concurrently enrolled in Adult Education.

As of June 2019, only 20% of America's high school population was concentrating on a career and technical education (CTE) pathway. One out of every four high schools do not offer CTE programs. Wyoming's education system is no different. With the launch of Next Generation Sector Partnerships, a more intense focus on realigning curriculums both at the high school and in the adult education classrooms has developed. Adult education classrooms are beginning to address some of the needs identified by local Next Gen Partnerships, including implementation of credentialed soft-skill training programs that integrate digital literacy.

Adult education has also begun to offer integrated education and training models that combine adult education and literacy with workforce preparation and training, "each of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available, especially with respect to improving reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency of eligible individuals" that "occur simultaneously," "use occupationally relevant instructional materials," and are "organized to function cooperatively" with "a single set of learning outcomes" (34 C.F.R. § 463.37). IET represents a broad spectrum of services to build foundational, employability, and occupational skills. Some adult education providers have discovered the power of IET and, through a variety of partnerships, have implemented this strategy in model programs that include Bridge Programs; Workplace Learning Programs; Pre-Apprenticeship Programs; Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education Programs; Corrections Education Programs; Post-secondary Education Programs; and Out-of-School Youth Programs.

However, because of Wyoming's rural nature, offering IET without a fully-developed distance-learning component that is available in all areas of the State is proving to be a challenge.

**(B) State Workforce Development Capacity. Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) and its State partners acknowledge the importance of aligning a wide range of publicly and privately funded education, employment, and training programs while providing high-quality customer service to job seekers, workers, and businesses through the One-Stop Delivery System. Strategically bringing key partners to the table is creating a job-driven workforce development and service-delivery system that results in linking Wyoming's diverse talent pool with specific employer and business needs. The One-Stop Centers continue to be valuable community resources and an important source of assistance for individuals looking for work, including WIOA core partner target populations or incumbent workers looking for opportunities to advance their careers. Key stakeholders and partners are continually working toward aligning workforce, education, and economic development with regional in-demand jobs. This reinforces the partnerships and strategies One-Stop Centers provide to

unemployed job seekers and workers who are underemployed with high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services to obtain and retain good jobs. The One-Stop Centers also help businesses find skilled workers and retain workers by providing ongoing education and training opportunities to upgrade worker skills. The Operational Section of this plan addresses more specific activities.

## **B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS**

**Vision:** Wyoming's Workforce System fosters a vibrant Wyoming economy through collaborative industry-led partnerships that provide diverse and comprehensive services to job seekers and employers.

**Mission:** Develop a quality and diverse workforce to meet the needs of Wyoming employers.

### **Goals:**

**Goal #1:** Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System

**Goal #2:** Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts

**Goal #3:** Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers;

**Goal #4:** Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources

**Goal #5:** Use the Career Pathways System to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries.

- (3) Performance Goals. Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)**

See Appendix 1.

- (4) Assessment. Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council will continue to use the Labor Market Information/ Research & Planning Division data extracted from Wyoming at Work (<https://www.wyomingatwork.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>), and other data management systems to ensure that the core programs are meeting the goals described in Sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) above. Such reports shall be presented to the Council.

## **C. STATE STRATEGY**

- (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined in WIOA Section 3(23).**

The WWDC has adopted the Next Generation Sector Partnerships (NGSP) approach to assist with the implementation and mobilization of community partnerships and targeted industry participation. Next Generation Sector Partnerships is a proven model that brings industry, education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations together to address the needs of a targeted industry. This industry-driven community-supported approach works on needed solutions and interventions to keep industry strong and build employment opportunities for clients.

- (2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional One-Stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also, describe strategies to strengthen workforce**



### **development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

The WWDC is provided feedback from each of the core programs by members at each quarterly meeting. In addition, core programs provide policy and monitoring updates to the WWDC as needed.

Through the One-Stop System, Wyoming has begun integrating services for youth and adults with and without barriers to ensure all Wyomingites are provided with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve gainful meaningful employment. Wyoming's partners within workforce development, education, and employment will continue to integrate wrap-around services that include access to basic literacy, post-secondary education, career, technical education, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities.

The partners will continue to request feedback from employers, use data to identify skill gaps for training purposes, recruit and retain Wyoming's talent, and develop strategies detailed in the Next Generation Sector Partnership model to ensure employer needs are met while helping to expand and diversify Wyoming's economy. Next Generation Sector Partnerships have been instrumental in assisting to break down silos.

Staff cross-training continues as a priority focus for the WWDC, including Council staff, by coordinating various training modalities to support continuous learning in the workforce system. Examples of internal professional development training include new employee training that is coordinated in conjunction with the DWS HR team, WIOA 101 and 201 trainings, Case Management, and Case Note training. Other external professional development training is offered, including Case Management, Coaching, and Motivational Interviewing for staff development to support the goals of the State.

## **II. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS**

### **A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS**

The Governor has provided the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) duties in Executive Order 2015-5 to include the provisions of WIOA, which includes:

- Enhancing workforce development activities that help sustain and diversify Wyoming's economy as further defined through the Governor's Vision & Goals;
- Establishing and implementing a strategic plan (not less than once every four years);
- Developing and adopting operating rules; and
- Creating and monitoring an annual budget.

The Board has identified one staff member, the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Liaison to the WWDC, to coordinate its activities on a monthly, quarterly, and as-needed basis. The DWS Liaison will collaborate with the Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Program Strategy Team, and the One-Stop operator to ensure the continuity and seamless operations of the One-Stop System. Quarterly and monthly Council meetings are held using Robert's Rules of Order to assist with effective meetings.

#### **1. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY**

##### **A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY**

**Goal #1:** Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System.

**Strategies:**

- Develop a comprehensive outreach plan to promote opportunities available from various One-Stop partners;
- Improve career pathways through coordination of education and training efforts among One-Stop partners; and

- Prepare and respond to the changing employment landscape through leveraging integrated partnerships.

**Goal #2:** Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts.

**Strategies:**

- Explore new resources and use those already available through One-Stop partners to promote the One-Stop System;
- Oversee the development and implementation of cross-training opportunities across One-Stop partners to increase awareness of the Workforce Development System;
- Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan emphasizing increased communication among One-Stop partners;
- Explore ways to highlight the personal impacts of the One-Stop System; and
- Promote the WWDC's strategic planning efforts to highlight achievements.

**Goal #3:** Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers.

**Strategies:**

- Leverage the Wyoming Grown program to encourage Wyoming natives to return to the state to live and work;
- Establish mechanisms to identify the specific support and resource needs of employers and job-seekers to streamline services;
- Implement One-Stop enhancements to provide expanded outreach beyond One-Stop Centers;
- Coordinate with Wyoming employers to strategize ways to recruit out-of-state job seekers; and
- Coordinate with One-Stop partners to provide skill development opportunities for in-demand and emerging jobs.

**Goal #4:** Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources.

**Strategies:**

- Use Next Gen Sector Partnerships to better coordinate One-Stop efforts;
- Integrate training efforts across partners to ensure consistency and increase efficiency;
- Evaluate and strengthen One-Stop partnerships with government agencies to implement seamless wrap-around services; and
- Ensure effective and efficient coordination among One-Stop Centers and partners to maximize resources and integrate outreach efforts.

**Goal #5:** Use the Career Pathways System to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries.

**Strategies:**

- Expand internal and external efforts to identify and place qualified participants into training programs aligned with career pathways;
- Evaluate mechanisms to promote career pathways to key One-Stop partners;
- Explore opportunities to expand apprenticeships, internships, and mentor programs for

those in rural and urban areas;

- Use the Career Pathways System to attract out-of-state youth to Wyoming and encourage existing Wyoming youth to stay in the State; and
- Leverage One-Stop partnerships to prepare the next generation of the Wyoming workforce through youth-specific opportunities.

The Core Programs will continue to work within the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model and participate in WWDC activities to assist with leveraging resources to increase educational access. In the fall of 2017, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (Wyoming's state workforce investment board) embarked on the implementation of an industry partnership model called Next Generation Sector Partnerships with the support of key state agencies represented on the Workforce Development Council. These agencies include the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Wyoming Business Council (WBC), the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), and the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC). Successes of the Partnerships include increased collaboration between employers, K–12, Community Colleges, community partners, and the WIOA Core Programs.

Under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), state workforce investment boards are charged with convening industry workgroups to bring targeted sectors to the table to work as a group to address industry talent needs. Industry partnerships have been implemented in Wyoming and throughout the country for years with varying degrees of success.

Next Generation Sector Partnerships are partnerships of businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the targeted industry's workforce and other competitiveness needs. This sustainable model enables business leaders to define and champion their own growth and competitiveness agenda, with government partners providing support in response to industry priorities at the regional level.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council has continued its work with the national Next Generation Sector Partnership team, a group that has helped regions in more than ten states launch more than 50 partnerships since 2010. With a state support team made up of representatives from DWS, WBC, WDE, and WCCC, the Council continues to help industry leaders across Wyoming organize and move to action. Wyoming currently boasts twelve partnerships in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, financial and insurance, and hospitality and tourism, with new partnerships under discussion in the regions.

This strategy marks a shift in culture as it is centered on business driving the agenda, while the public sector partners leave their agendas at the door.

#### **A. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN**

##### **Wyoming Workforce Development Council**

The WWDC is the State Workforce Investment Board for Wyoming. All DWS programs are coordinated with the WWDC while focusing on target populations.

##### **Next Generation Sector Partnerships**

The Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative has brought together industry, registered apprenticeships, education, training, and other partners to establish long-term sustainable relationships between industry and local and regional government partners to address the short- and long-term employment needs of industry. Next Generation Sector Partnerships are industry-led, which means businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region are invited to work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry. Wyoming launched the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative in late spring/early summer of 2018. Each regional partnership has reported wins to include new programming at the community colleges, dual enrollment programs, closer collaboration between K–12, community colleges, businesses, and the workforce centers.

## Talent Transition

The Wyoming Talent Transition Project will launch an outreach campaign to create a larger flow of adults seeking career changes to growing occupations and industries and to increase the ability of the workforce and education systems not only reach new populations, but also work together to help people receive the skills they need to transition to new jobs and careers in growing industries. especially those with Next Gen Partnerships. While many of Wyoming's Next Gen Partnerships have already helped inform the development of new education and training programs, and stronger connections among the workforce and education systems, as this outreach campaign increases the flow of interested jobseekers and career-changers, both systems will need to scale up their collaboration, working closely with industry. The overarching goal of the Wyoming Talent Transition Initiative is to help companies, workers, and communities benefit immediately, but also to demonstrate how Wyoming's state government and local institutions can work with the private sector to advance the economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

Progress will be assessed by evaluating the following:

- Increasing number of jobseekers and other transitioning workers successfully placed in careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Increasing number of people who enter into retraining or education to qualify for new careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Decreasing number of unfilled job openings in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Increasing diversification of the Wyoming economy as health care, manufacturing, and construction have access to the talent to grow and become a larger share of the State's economy; and

Increasing incomes for Wyoming workers who make the transition to careers in growing industries.

## Other Partners

In addition to the core and required partners, DWS collaborates and aligns activities with other state partners that include, but are not limited to:

- **Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS)** – serves families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF);
- **Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)** – serves students who are reading at below grade level and at-risk sub-groups (i.e. students with disabilities). At the middle/junior/senior high levels, the WDE helps students stay in school through engagement and a rigorous academic approach, internships, and appropriate job or work experiences during the school day. WDE also provides leadership opportunities, peer-to-peer mentoring, and career technical education;
- **Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC)** – provides reentry workforce readiness and education services for ex-offenders, both in prison within the pre-release category, as well as those already located within communities;
- **Job Corps** – helps individuals who cannot find and/or maintain employment, youth who did not achieve success in high school, or young people who can't afford college. Job Corps serves individuals ages 16–24 by providing education and training opportunities. DWS and Job Corps work together to offer education programs for youth and young adults, with the purpose of obtaining a high school diploma, High School Equivalency Certificate (HSEC), and technical skills, while preparing for employment;
- **Local School District and Secondary Schools** – serve program-eligible youth, including transition services to eligible students with disabilities, and others in need through the 48 school districts that govern secondary schools, including alternative schools for at-risk youth;
- **Center for Workforce Inclusion, Inc.** – serves the Senior Community Service Employment Program to

help older workers obtain unsubsidized employment;

- **Northwest Community Action Programs of Wyoming (NOWCAP)** (a private non-profit community action agency) – provides innovative services to people with developmental disabilities and brain injuries throughout Wyoming; and
- **Wyoming Independent Living and Wyoming Services for Independent Living** – helps individuals with disabilities and students with disabilities overcome any barriers to independent living, including employment.

Innovations by the core partners have been inspired by cooperative planning processes through Next Generation Sector Partnerships, employers, and other stakeholders. These innovations have been the direct result of significant changes and realignments over the past couple of years. Changes in the economy are causing unemployed adults to need up-skilling, larger numbers of immigrants residing in the State, the significant achievement gap of minority students in reading and math, and the non-completers from high schools. The workforce is changing, and new technologies now require higher-level skill sets. The State is making substantial strides in attempting to upscale and educate Wyoming residents to address future workforce needs. In-state initiatives demonstrate the State's efforts to upscale educational efforts and train the population.

- **Next Generation Sector Partnerships:** The Wyoming Workforce Development Council entered into a partnership to launch Next Generation Sector Partnership projects around the State in an effort to grow critical economic sectors and to form an alignment with many education, workforce training, economic development, and government partners;
- **Educational Attainment Initiative (EAI):** aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable post-secondary credential to 67% by 2025;
- **Perkins V:** represents an important chance to expand opportunities for every student to explore, choose, and follow career and technical education programs of study and career pathways to earn credentials of value.

State and Federal Appropriations for Grant Programs include:

- **Wyoming Works:** 2019 State legislation to provide grants for;
  - Adult students to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment; and
  - Wyoming Community Colleges to develop stackable credential programs and other in-demand credential programs of study.
- **Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Training Fund;**
  - Business Training Grants connect employers with professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment;
  - Pre-hire grants focus on creating a trained workforce for specific Wyoming industries;
  - Pre-obligation grants set-aside funds for large relocation or expansion projects for Wyoming businesses;
  - Apprenticeship grants provide funding to develop industry-specific workforce business/industries where there is a shortage of skilled workers; and
  - Internship grants fund Wyoming businesses, providing opportunities to offer structured learning experiences to individuals through internships that enhance an individual's work skills, knowledge, and abilities.

#### **A. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT, AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS**

The Wyoming Workforce Centers are at the forefront of the workforce activities and represent Wyoming's

version of the American Job Centers. Reaching and serving our state's most vulnerable populations requires strong, effective working relationships among the programs and agencies that strive to build Wyoming's talented workforce. State staff have worked and will continue to work to foster these partnerships, with the goal of building an effective referral system and collaborative service delivery platforms that allow for quality wrap-around services. These crucial efforts are designed to identify ways to blend and braid resources to reduce duplication of services and to ensure qualified professionals offer appropriate services. Under this plan, Wyoming places a high priority on relationships among core partners.

**Wagner-Peyser (WP)** – The Wagner Peyser Program provides basic career services to all individuals seeking them. This includes individuals who are employed, unemployed, underemployed, who have not completed high school education, who have no education beyond high school (or equivalent), as well as individuals with post-secondary degrees and vocational credentials. The basic career services are tailored to the individual needs of the job seeker and form the backbone of the One-Stop Delivery System.

While some job seekers may only need self-service, others may need other basic career services, including reviewing job postings, labor market information, labor exchange services, or information about other services. Other job seekers may need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive skills assessments, career planning, and the development of an individual employment plan that outlines the needs and goals of successful employment.

The One-Stop Centers continue to provide an array of basic career services to all individuals. The individual needs of the customer and appropriate referrals to WIOA and partner programs are given a high level of attention.

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** – The DVR program provides individualized and customized services and support to individuals with disabilities. DVR staff members are subject matter experts; however, the One-Stop Centers will continue to coordinate services between all programs. As appropriate, the DVR and WIOA plans will complement one another.

Moving forward, DVR and Employment & Training will work more closely to integrate business service activities and collaborate to further integrate services. These collaborative meetings act as a way to educate each other on the services available under all titles, which results in appropriate referrals and enhanced outcomes. State-level training will be offered to all staff. Efforts to integrate service delivery and formalize referral processes will continue on the State level as well as between programs.

**Title II Adult Education Program** – The Adult Education Program is under the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) and has a good working relationship among internal and external partners. To achieve workforce success in Wyoming, partnerships are of paramount importance. These partnerships help streamline operations, leverage funding, and facilitate desired outcomes, thus enabling government at all levels to serve its citizens. Employment in in-demand occupations is the goal for all individuals and will include non-traditional training choices.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will continue to strengthen their relationships with the Adult Education Programs throughout the state. The goal is to have working hours at each Adult Education location, providing the citizens of Wyoming with better access to all programs.

**Job Corps** – Wyoming has one Job Corps Center, the Wind River Job Corps Center, located in Riverton, Wyoming. Job Corps is a federally-funded program under WIOA that provides free education and training to young adults (16–24-year-olds). Eligible youth are able to earn a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma and receive life-, soft-, and occupational-skills training.

Wyoming continues to strengthen the relationship between the Wyoming One-Stop Centers and Job Corps. Across the State, the One-Stop Centers will meet with the Job Corps representatives on a regular basis and provide outreach that includes program information. The One-Stop Centers closest to the Wind River Job Corps Center will work directly with the Job Corps Admissions Counselors and co-enroll the appropriate non-residential (students who do not live on the Job Corps campus) and residential youth in WIOA youth programs. Co-enrollment will be encouraged in all areas and will be based on individual needs.

**Veterans** – Wyoming will continue its strong tradition of promoting training, hiring, and retention of veterans while ensuring that veterans receive priority of service in all required funded programs. Continuing to develop close working relationships with workforce system partners will help to ensure veterans are represented to potential employers and business owners as qualified and professional employees who bring a unique set of skills to the workplace. Workforce Specialists will continue to provide veterans with employment services, including job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, workshops on resume preparation, and on conducting effective job searches. One-Stop Center staff also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA-funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the State.

**Jobs for Veterans State Grant** – The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) establishes a focus on serving eligible transitioning service members, eligible veterans, and eligible spouses by providing employment services and resources to obtain meaningful careers. The Department of Labor rolled out a Refocus on JVSG to ensure that veterans and eligible spouses receive the best combination of services at American Job Centers and that JVSG staff are performing their roles according to the statutory requirements in Chapter 41. Priority of Service is required for veterans and eligible spouses for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor. Priority of Service examples include receiving priority on referrals to job opportunities, testing, counseling, and other services, including training programs.

JVSG staff provide individualized career and training-related services to eligible veterans and persons with significant barriers to employment and assist employers in filling their workforce development needs with job-ready veterans. Eligibility is determined if an applicant served 180 days of active service and released/discharged under conditions other than dishonorable; transitioning service member within 24 months of retirement; eligible spouse of a veteran who has a total service-connected disability; is Missing in Action; captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; is a Prisoner of War or who died from a service-connected disability.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide specialized services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to employment and eligible spouses. Significant veteran barriers include:

- Special disabled or disabled veteran (38 U.S.C § 4211);
- Homeless (Homeless Assistance Act 42 U.S.C § 11302(a));
- Recently separated or currently long term unemployed (27 consecutive weeks within the last 12 months);
- Offender;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Low-income (as defined by WIOA);
- Veterans, ages 18–24;
- Transitioning service members in need of intensive services per criteria of VPL 07-14 or 03-19;
- Wounded Warriors in military treatment facilities and their family caregivers; and
- Vietnam-era Veterans (2/2/61 to 05/07/75)

DVOPs provide intensive services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for employment or training. DVOPs will continue to perform outreach to regional areas and build relationships with required partners to ensure referrals of Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to the American Job Centers.

Business Service Teams conduct outreach to employers to promote advocacy and the hiring of all Veterans

served by the American Job Center in coordination with a strong partnership with DVOPs in the American Job Centers. The Business Service Teams plan and participate in job/career fairs; conduct job searches and workshops; establish job search groups in conjunction with employers; coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs, business associations, and businesses to promote/secure employment and training programs for Veterans; inform federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; assist with promotion of the Hire Veterans Medallion Program; and coordinate and participate with other business outreach efforts. All efforts by Business Service Teams are communicated on a normal basis through collaboration with DVOPs and Workforce Specialists to assist all Veterans in reaching their individual employment plan goals.

The State will use the incentive award for the JVSG program for professional development to encourage attendance at the National Association State Workforce Association (NASWA) annual Veteran Conference.

**Individuals with Limited English Proficiency** – The Wyoming One-Stop Centers make every attempt to ensure the needs of customers with limited English-speaking skills are met. To provide interpretation services in a timely manner, the One-Stop Centers use the language line for interpreting services. Services are provided in coordination with partners with special programs and the Adult Learning Centers. The Adult Learning Centers also provide English as a Second Language classes. As the State moves forward, planning is underway to expand services to qualified English as a Second Language participants for enrollments into IELCE programs, IETs, and other work-based training models.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will continue to strengthen their partnership with the Adult Learning Centers throughout the state. Through these partnerships, the One-Stop Center staff will improve their presence in these locations, offering frequent presentations of workforce programs and rotating office hours to provide the citizens of Wyoming with better access to all programs.

**Ex-Offenders** – The Wyoming One-Stop Centers continue to strengthen partnerships with the Wyoming Department of Corrections. Through partnerships, the One-Stop Centers work closely with adult correctional institutions to provide educational, career, and technical training to incarcerated adults, ensuring a smooth transition for returning citizens and a reduction in the State's recidivism rate.

The One-Stop Centers are also tasked with working with all of Wyoming's juvenile correctional institutions and local youth out-of-home placement locations, as well as those on probation and parole. Because many young people are sent to out-of-home placement for misdemeanors and non-violent offenses, including violating curfew, skipping school, or running away from home, during a period of confinement or incarceration, youth are disconnected from school, their community, and extracurricular activities. The One-Stop Centers will remain involved with these young people and help the youth identify strengths, assets, and aspirations, just as the Centers serve their non-justice-involved peers.

**Older Individuals (SCSEP)** – The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors.

Wyoming will continue to collaborate with SCSEP staff and work with SCSEP participants to ensure familiarity with One-Stop Center locations and share information on other workforce programs. The One-Stop Centers will continue to strengthen partnerships with SCSEP to maximize participant referrals and optimize participant training.

**Native American Programs** – Tribal relationships have been established near the Wind River Reservation and will continue to be strengthened to increase Native American participation in WIOA. Wyoming One-Stop Centers will explore ways to access the untapped labor pool and assist with outlining creative ways to collaborate with Native Americans.

**Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)** – The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services provides these services through the statewide network of workforce centers to ensure that MSFWs receive the full range of employment, training, and educational services on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs.



**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants, Long-term Unemployed** – The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services and the Unemployment Insurance Division have a long-standing partnership that is focused on coordinating reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long-term unemployed. The two programs work closely to strategically plan and support the implementation of initiatives designed to benefit their shared customers.

UI claimants visiting One-Stop Centers receive skill assessments, career counseling, and labor market information. The Workforce Specialists recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short-term industry training, or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the required registration on Wyoming at Work, the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with online registration and help them create a resume and virtual recruiter. The virtual recruiter feature notifies a UI claimant of new job openings that meet their search criteria. Additional services to UI claimants include assistance to create resumes tailored to each type of employment that a UI claimant is seeking and techniques for improving interviewing skills. Online/electronic applications are prevalent with many employers; this application process is often problematic for UI claimants who lack computer literacy. The One-Stop Center staff are familiar with the local employer requirements and assist with this online application process. UI claimants receive referrals to the Dislocated Worker program for upgrade training for in-demand occupations.

Out-of-area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed. Referrals are provided to core program partners to help participants increase academic and employability skills, for a High School Equivalency Assessment, or for vocational rehabilitation services to support the claimant's job search activities.

Wyoming will continue to identify strategies to improve communications and better the partnership between the workforce and UI systems. The long-term goals for the upcoming years are to promote reemployment and a more seamless customer experience. These goals include reducing and maintaining the average duration of UI benefits, continuing the UI profiling system, and looking further into Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).

The long-term unemployed (LTU—individuals out of work for 26+ weeks) face a unique combination of social, emotional, and skill deficiencies caused by the duration of their unemployment and exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These deficiencies require intensive “wrap-around” services to address these issues effectively while rapidly moving individuals to paid work experiences, transitional jobs, and reemployment.

**WIOA Adult Priority of Service** – The State and all One-Stop Centers have adopted an adult priority of service policy that targets English Language Learners, Basic Skills Deficient, Public Assistance recipients, and those who meet other low-income criteria. Meeting these WIOA requirements ensures the majority of Wyoming's WIOA Adult participants come from these priority populations.

One-Stop Centers are designed to integrate other community partners, with the full integration of these two systems intended as the norm for service delivery. In other areas, particularly in metropolitan communities, while the workforce may sit outside of the human service governance structure, MOUs or contracts have been established for the provision of services. However, some towns in Wyoming do not have a physical One-Stop location; the ability to conveniently access services is critical, particularly for customers who may lack transportation resources. In these areas, connection with the One-Stop Centers may take the form of participation on the local workforce board or informal referrals and relationships. While not every town in Wyoming has a physical One-Stop Center, partnership innovation methods must be found to provide resources and meet the needs of low-income job seekers.

The One-Stop Center staff will develop comprehensive Individual Employment Plans to address participants' needs. The plans may target Specialized Assessments, Career Planning, OJTs, Internships, Short-Term Pre-Vocational Services (soft skills such as communication, punctuality, and personal maintenance skills), Workforce Preparation Activities (resume writing, interviewing skills, dress for success), Support Services, and

Financial Literacy. Wyoming has elected to concentrate on the need for financial literacy programming for all individuals.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – The TANF program provides benefits for families in need with children under age 18. The TANF program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency through employment and training activities provided by the TANF Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER). TANF supportive services, including assistance with childcare and transportation expenses, are available to help adults in the family prepare for employment and to promote self-sufficiency.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program, a Strategic Partner program, was created to provide access to the necessary skills, training, or experience to increase an eligible recipient's ability to obtain gainful employment. The services provided by the SNAP E&T program include a career assessment by a career and technical advisor, assistance with grant and scholarship applications, enrollment in career education and training programs, assistance with eligible tuition expenses not covered by federal or state grants or scholarships, and other education, training, work, and employment services.

The One-Stop Centers will increase collaboration with TANF/POWER and SNAP to provide cohesive customer service, as well as to determine appropriate referrals.

The Employment and Training Program is a required component of SNAP. The primary goal of the SNAP E&T program is to provide SNAP participants with opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience that will improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. The E&T program offers a way to allow SNAP recipients to meet work requirements. These services are carried out in Wyoming's Dads Making a Difference program.

**Youth** – WIOA has increased its focus on serving eligible out-of-school youth, as well as those young people identified as most in need. The program focus includes career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and ending services with employment in a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. The youth program aims to reposition this population of young people as an asset to employers with a need for skilled workers.

Several methods to reach this population are being used; however, connecting with young people where they are has proven to be extremely effective. Being visible in the community and meeting youth outside traditional service delivery locations—parks, recreation centers, shopping malls, community centers, health clinics, clubs, movie theaters, community-based and faith-based organizations, emergency food programs, and homeless shelters—could assist the One-Stop Centers with recruitment efforts.

Because the out-of-school age ceiling is 24, many Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants may also be eligible for the WIOA youth program. The One-Stop Centers are working to strengthen partnerships with local POWER/TANF staff to reach this population. Community organizations can be another strong partner in reaching out-of-school youth; using multiple methods to connect with out-of-school youth ensures that as many out-of-school youths as possible are reached, which may include disconnected youth.

Workforce Specialists work with youth participants to identify a career pathway that includes appropriate education and employment goals, address career planning, review results of the objective assessment, and prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant. Identification of career pathways allows participants to see a clear path toward sustainable employment while obtaining stackable credentials. Work experiences or work-based learning activities are considered the most important program element. Work experience activities available to youth participants include Work Experience (WEX), Career Exploration, Career Planning, Career Readiness, Pre-Apprenticeship, Internships, Job Shadowing, and On-the-Job Training (OJT). These activities are designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the world of work and its requirements by helping them acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. These opportunities provide youth participants with opportunities for career

exploration and skill development and must include academic and occupational education.

Participants and Workforce Specialists work together to determine which elements are provided based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants in obtaining a focus to begin to develop competencies for their future. This includes the identification of needed skills, work readiness, post-secondary training, and career pathways. Goal setting and progression toward meeting those goals are another important component for participants. Identification of appropriate career pathways goals, career/employment goals, and education/academic goals assists participants to formulate an action plan and make gains towards their career goals.

During the upcoming years, Wyoming will continue to concentrate on the need for financial literacy for Wyoming's young people. Financial literacy is one of the 14-Program Elements that the One-Stop Centers are providing to most youth participants. This will continue to be an area that the State focuses on, and DWS will further develop methods, tools, and activities designed to educate and assist youth with making informed financial decisions (including budgeting and accessing checking and savings accounts); learning to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt; and learning the significance of credit reports and scores.

Many young people need supportive services to ensure they can participate or continue to participate in a WIOA activity or partner activity. Workforce Specialists will assess the need and availability of funds when offering support services. Program participation concludes when a participant has met their goals and achievement objectives, has been determined to be self-sufficient, and no longer needs additional services. Continued contact by the Workforce Specialists shall be in place for 12 months, and participants are encouraged to use One-Stop and partner services for future needs.

To ensure the One-Stop Centers remain committed to Wyoming's mission and vision, the One-Stop Deputy Administrator or designee shall submit an annual outreach and goal achievement plan to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative. The plan shall set forth numerical goals of the projected number of WIOA and WP participants to be recruited and shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- Each office shall be included in the submission of the outreach plan;
- The plan must be signed by the Director or designee and submitted to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council yearly no later than April 30;
- The plan must identify how participants will be contacted and how those who qualify for services will be registered and recruited into the One-Stop System;
- The plan must include a goal for the actual number of participants to be recruited for the upcoming program year. The recruitment numbers must be aligned with the priority of populations and the local demographics;
- The plan must include a report on the goals that were met or not met from the previous year's plan. If the goals were not met, the plan must address the reasons the numbers were not met and identify new approaches to achieve the new goals; and
- The Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative and Program Strategy Team must be available to provide technical assistance for plan development and will negotiate the plan's goals with the Director or designee.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative is responsible for final approval of the local office plan.

#### **A. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS**

One-Stop Center staff members:

- Provide direct outreach services to businesses to develop job opportunities for all customers;
- Collaborate with the Chambers of Commerce in their communities to connect with employers in their

communities;

- Collaborate and provide resources and training to employers concerning hiring people with disabilities through VR Program Consultants;
- Assist in coordinating local job fairs and hiring events for employers, and to compliment DWS Employer Seminars provided in local communities on a rotating basis; and
- Use social media and Wyoming at Work to promote open jobs to job seekers.

To ensure the One-Stop Centers remain committed to Wyoming's mission and vision, the One-Stop Deputy Administrator or designee shall submit an annual outreach and goal achievement plan to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative. The plan shall set forth numerical goals of the projected number of Business Engagement efforts to support the Effectiveness in Serving Employers' goals: Employer Penetration and Employer Retention. The Business Engagement and Outreach plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:

- Each office shall be included in the submission of the outreach plan;
- The plan must be signed by the Director or designee and submitted to the Wyoming Workforce Development Council yearly no later than April 30th;
- The plan must identify how business outreach efforts will be planned and delivered to the local area with an emphasis on building relationships. The plan shall also include how the One-Stop Center shall provide education on services available, workforce development, and recruitment efforts to assist with business needs;
- The plan must set a goal for the actual number of contacts/events to support Business Engagement outreach efforts for the upcoming program year. The plan must be designed to fit the needs of the local area and customized to the respective Workforce Center coverage area;
- The plan must develop a synopsis of the goals that were met or not met from the previous year's plan. If the goals were not met, the plan must address the reasons the goals were not met and identify new approaches to achieve new goals;
- The Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative and Program Strategy Team will be available to provide technical assistance for the plan development, and will negotiate the plan's goals with the Director or designee; and
- The Wyoming Workforce Development Council representative shall give final approval of the local office plan.

One-Stop Center staff members maintain memberships with human resource organizations to determine industry trends and work closely with groups tasked to bring in new businesses. They also provide labor market information and collaborate with required programs to meet business needs. The Wyoming Workforce Development Council directs and drives DWS' focus on sector strategy development and partnerships through Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

Members of the local and/or regional Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams include Workforce Center Managers, Vocational Rehabilitation Area Managers, Adult Education Directors, and other representatives from DWS.

Staff conduct candidate screenings as needed for specific job orders posted on Wyoming at Work for job seekers currently registered and looking for work. Through the WIOA training program, staff members work closely with employers before or after training to place qualified individuals into a worksite matching their skills and abilities.

One-Stop Centers hold on-site hiring events to provide employers with a known location where they can connect job seekers with their business. Customized meetings are conducted with businesses to address industry needs, and Vocational Rehabilitation offers customized employer services related to disabilities

based on employer and client needs.

One-Stop Center staff members:

- Write and review job descriptions for job orders;
- Provide mock interviews for clients to improve interviewing skills;
- Explain basic labor laws to employers, disseminate labor law posters and make referrals to Labor Standards when appropriate;
- Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) at the request of employers that includes wages, available workforce, and current market trends, using Wyoming at Work and Research & Planning;
- Determine whether an apprenticeship program could be applicable for the employer's needs during staff employer visits or discussions with community partners and college staff;
- Refer employers to the Department of Labor's apprentice representative and work with employers in developing an apprenticeship program by connecting training entities, DOLs representative, and DWS staff, including the registered apprenticeship expansion grant;
- Work with employers to develop job descriptions in Wyoming at Work and/or train employers on how to post job orders in Wyoming at Work;
- Refer qualified job applicants to employers to help facilitate the labor exchange process;
- Conduct outreach to employers to determine current and future workforce needs;
- Provide referrals to economic development entities and community partners for assistance as appropriate;
- Provide both large and small meeting rooms for employers to use to conduct on-site interviews, hiring events, and meetings during regular business hours;
- Work in partnership with partner programs and industry on focus panels to develop strategies through individualized/ group meetings and Next Generation Sector Partnerships Regional Teams to improve local workforce skills deficiencies or other industry needs;
- Refer employers to the Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) for skills improvement/credentialing for incumbent worker training and to the available appropriate basic (Wagner-Peyser) individualized training and training services;
- Outline available services, including screening services, job postings, hiring events, referrals to other community resources such as Wyoming Small Business Centers and Wyoming Business Council;
- Perform outreach and/or respond to employer's requests to provide information about the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program and connect them with a WOTC representative for assistance with the application process if necessary;
- Have knowledge of and can refer to the Federal Bonding Program Manager for additional assistance for the Federal Bonding Program; and
- Refer employers to community resources for additional needs.

Customer Service is a priority focus of the One-Stop Center's front-line staff regardless of the entry point—whether via telephone, in person, or email. Intake assessment forms are integral to ensuring that a job seeker receives all needed services. Job seekers and employers are provided the option to complete forms on their own or are assisted by a Workforce Specialist.

If the customer is identified as an employer, they will be connected with a business representative at the One-Stop Center. The business representative will familiarize the employer with services provided at the One-Stop Center and other applicable DWS and community programs. For example, if an employer is interested

in hiring individuals with disabilities, these opportunities will be shared with Vocational Rehabilitation staff. Customized meetings may be scheduled if determined to be the best course of action for the employer.

If the employer chooses to post and/or recruit for a job opening, the business representative will assist the employer in creating an employer registration on Wyoming at Work ([www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com)). The business representative may complete this registration on behalf of the employer.

One-Stop Center staff must verify all employers are in good standing with Wyoming Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance before creating or approving an account on Wyoming at Work. If the employer has not registered as a business with the State of Wyoming, they will be directed to the joint business registration form.

The employer has the option to use self-service features or staff-assisted business services. With self-service, the employer may post jobs in Wyoming at Work and review the resumes of registered job seekers. At any time, an employer may opt to use a combination of self-service and staff-assisted service.

All job postings are reviewed by One-Stop Center staff for accuracy and clarity. If One-Stop Center staff create a job posting on behalf of an employer, the job-posting process can occur in person, by phone, or by email before posting the job. In the case of an employer-posted job, the One-Stop Center staff will use the Job Order Creation/Proxy Email Review Checklist and will contact the employer to address any inconsistencies or corrections.

For every job posting on Wyoming at Work, the One-Stop Center staff will complete notifications to all veterans who qualify for the job. Notifications may also be completed for qualified non-veterans, a requirement for all job postings that fall under the Wyoming Preference Act of 1971.

The employer has several options at every step of this process, and a variety of additional services may be provided to the employer based on request. These options and services include having One-Stop Center staff pre-screen and/or collect application materials, One-Stop Center staff assisting in the early interview process as a part of pre-screening, and using conference rooms and other in-house resources, including fax machines, copiers, and printers.

#### **A. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

The Wyoming Community College's Adult Education (AE) program includes workforce training and literacy instruction, employer professional development, integrated education and training programs, Bridge programs, workplace literacy, English as a Second Language, basic literacy, and preparation that leads to a Wyoming high school equivalency certificate. The AE program works closely with DWS to enable adults and out-of-school youth to achieve basic educational goals for those who are lacking in education. Community colleges throughout the state are valuable partners in serving clients. The target populations are adults, dislocated workers, and youth who are 16 years of age or older. Referrals to AE programs are conducted when a client at an AJC needs to earn at least a high school equivalency certificate. Several Adult Education Directors from across Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to be encouraged to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams to ensure the connection from K-12 to post-secondary and employer's workforce needs.

#### **Wyoming Department of Education**

The Wyoming Department of Education's target populations includes students who are reading below grade level and at-risk sub-groups (students with disabilities on Individual Education Programs). At the middle/junior/senior high levels, the Department helps students stay in school through engagement and a rigorous academic approach, internships, and job or work experiences during the school day as coursework allows. The Department also provides leadership opportunities, peer-to-peer mentoring, and career technical education to the targeted youth population. DWS can assist the Wyoming Department of Education in helping students understand the importance of career pathways. For instance, the AJCs help students learn about professional opportunities. Referrals to the WIOA program for clients who need additional training and education to find sustainable work would be directed to DWS to begin to receive training, application assistance,

and education opportunities. Several District Superintendents from across Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams to ensure the connection from K–12 to post-secondary and employer’s workforce needs.

### **University of Wyoming**

Representatives from the University of Wyoming participated in the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Academy and will continue to engage in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Regional Teams to ensure the connection from K–12 to post-secondary and employer’s workforce needs.

The Wyoming Department of Education Superintendent provides one representative to advise the Wyoming Workforce Development Council; staff works closely with this individual. The Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission is a Wyoming Workforce Development Council member and provides two staff to assist with furthering Next Generation Sector Partnerships in Wyoming.

### **A. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS**

In addition to Section VI, DWS maintains a close working relationship with each of the Community College Workforce Training Programs, Wyoming Contractors Association Regional Training Center, truck driving schools, Registered Apprenticeship, and other private training entities that are used on a regional basis as employer and job seeker needs are identified.

The Eligible Training Provider List is frequently used to identify what types of training are available and where in the State they are located.

### **A. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS**

Multiple sources are available in Wyoming to assist with funding for training and education programs. The Next Generation Sector Partnership regional teams have accessed funding from many programs. The Adult Education, Career & Technical Education programs have allowed for prioritization of funding if a request is submitted by an established Next Generation Sector Partnership.

Other links between programs include:

- Educational Attainment Initiative aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable post-secondary credential to 67% by 2025.

State and Federal Appropriations for Grant Programs include:

- Wyoming Works: 2019 State legislation to provide grants for:
  - Adult students to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment; and
  - Wyoming Community Colleges to develop stackable credential programs and other in-demand credential programs of study.
- Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Development Training Fund
  - Business Training Grant connects employers with professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment;
  - Pre-hire grants focus on creating a trained workforce for specific Wyoming industries;
  - Pre-obligation grants set-aside funds for large relocation or expansion projects for Wyoming businesses; and
  - Apprenticeship grants provide funding to develop industry-specific workforce businesses / industries with a shortage of skilled workers.

Three years ago, Adult Education (AE) and DWS cooperated to create “Partnership Day” that brought in speakers to address information of mutual interest to One-Stop managers, AE directors, post-secondary providers and instructors, employers, and Registered Apprenticeships. Speakers this year will cover “Work Ethics: The Building Blocks for the 21st Century Workforce” and “Career Pathways and Career Infused

Education.” These speakers will focus on the benefits of pursuing credentials through both post-secondary education and through Registered Apprenticeships and other training providers.

## **A. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIALS**

Improving access to post-secondary education is addressed more specifically in **Section VI Program-Specific Requirements for Core Program** of this plan, and also by the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative. Wyoming will continue efforts to increase the number of providers on the ETPL list by contacting providers not currently on the approved Eligible Training Provider List. DWS was awarded \$641K in US DOL discretionary funds to expand apprenticeship opportunities statewide from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. The work plan for Wyoming includes the following goals: strategic planning to fully integrate apprenticeship programs into state workforce development, education and economic development strategies; outreach and communication to elevate apprenticeship importance and opportunities; layering the State-funded Workforce Development Training Fund Apprenticeship Grants to provide a State incentive for businesses to create a registered apprenticeship program; coordination for technical assistance for businesses to create or expand registered apprenticeships; coordination for apprentice recruitment, screening, and enrollment; and creation of a grant to offset costs for on-the-job-learning for employers with registered apprenticeship programs.

### **I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council and DWS have continued to foster relationships with economic development entities across Wyoming. The WWDC encourages participation by regional or local economic development entities in the sector strategy initiative implemented by the WWDC and DWS in 2018. The Governor has appointed the CEO of the Wyoming Business Council, Wyoming’s Economic Development Entity, to the WWDC. The Wyoming Business Council is an economic development entity that boasts seven regional offices covering all of Wyoming. The Wyoming Business Council employs individuals who promote economic development in industries important to Wyoming.

The WWDC and DWS implemented the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model in 2018. That initiative has focused on employer/business/sector needs based on current labor market information to prioritize regional efforts. In addition to business leading the effort, the partnerships include, but are not limited to, educational institutions to include K–12 and post-secondary education, other education and training providers, economic development entities, and local workforce development. The community/governmental partners coordinate and align services to employer needs and will leverage Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs.

## **B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES**

The Research & Planning section will continue to develop and disseminate information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, workforce investment grants, state-funded labor market information, and, where possible, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health supported workplace safety research, evaluation, and surveillance.

Several disparate case management and data systems are in use across the WIOA core programs and the Research & Planning section within the Wyoming DWS. The State of Wyoming uses Google Apps for email, calendar, and collaborative communications. Google Apps is available to all State of Wyoming employees. The Research & Planning section has multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that allow for data sharing between core programs, partner programs, surrounding states’ programs, and the LMI Division.

Following is a description of each case management system used by the core programs.

### **Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Workers & Youth – Wyoming at Work**

DWS currently uses Geographic Solutions’ Virtual Operating System for labor exchange services and case management. The state’s electronic labor management system, Wyoming at Work, is part of the virtual One-Stop System designed and operated by Geographic Solutions, Inc. of Palm Harbor, Florida. The Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and Trade Adjustment Assistance system applications have been in place in Wyoming at Work for years, with regular updates. Wyoming at Work also includes detailed labor market information and



Wyoming's list of eligible training providers. Newer modules and version upgrades are continually added to improve and streamline the services available to Wyoming's job seekers, employers, and DWS staff.

DWS uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DWS uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client Social Security numbers (SSNs) submitted through Web applications are obfuscated during receipt in the database. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS program staff can view applicant/trainee information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by their management or designated representative.

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation – WINRS**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) currently uses the Wyoming Information Network for Rehabilitation Services (WINRS) for case management. The system is designed and operated by Libera, Inc. of Jamestown, New York. The General Rehabilitation Program, Supported Employment, Small Business Program, and Youth Transition Program are managed with this system. Regular updates will occur to the system to maintain compliance with State and federal requirements. The DVR installed this system on August 31, 2015. Newer modules and system upgrades have continually been added to improve and streamline the services available to the DVR staff as they work to assist the eligible disabled population in Wyoming. A major upgrade is planned for 2022.

The DVR uses multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. The DVR uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client SSNs are hidden after DWS staff members enter the SSNs into the system. Servers housing the databases containing SSNs are "single-purpose restricted" to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS staff can view all client information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized DWS staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by the DVR management team.

#### **Adult Education and Family Literacy – LACES**

Adult Education and Family Literacy uses the National Reporting System student information management system Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) by LiteracyPro. LACES collects demographic, assessment, instructional contact hours, and programmatic assignment information. It is able to disaggregate data as needed. Performance measures for post-secondary entry and completion of high school equivalency are also collected. Employment status is collected upon entry, and data matching of employment to Adult Education (AE) clients is completed with the Research & Planning section at this time. Only aggregated data is reported to the National Reporting System portal for federal reporting.

Security levels are assigned based on the employee's staffing position, with all access being established by administrative personnel at the state level. The State AE Office may access all student information databases (LACES) at the provider level. Local providers only see their own data. Unique client identification numbers are assigned within the system. Student SSN information is used only in the data-match process for employment and by the National Student Clearinghouse for students entering college or post-secondary skills training.

#### **1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF--**

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### **Labor market information**

Wyoming intends to extend, continue, and where relevant, revise the historical and current provision of Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA program participation data collected through the one-stop system provided to Research and Planning for longitudinal and descriptive analysis in support of planning and evaluation using UI administrative records, occupational licensing, and educational outcomes.

### **Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Workers & Youth – Wyoming at Work**

Wyoming currently uses an information management system called Wyoming at Work, operated by a third-party vendor, Geographic Solutions. Wyoming at Work facilitates common data collection for Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Veterans Employment and Training Services, and Trade Adjustment Assistance. Reporting of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser data and performance outcomes, including Veterans Program data and outcomes, is accomplished through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS).

The management information system collects and stores the data for required Federal reports, including:

- Wagner Peyser Act 7B Reports for the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program (MIC);
- 9048 Profiling Report.

Wyoming at Work contains a component library system that collects and stores elements required for Federal reports, captures the appropriate elements from data forms, then generates the Federal and State mandated Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment and Training Services, and Trade Adjustment Act reports. Reports include both quarterly and annual reports required under these acts.

### **DVR – Case Management System**

The DVR installed a new case management system in August 2015, hosted by a third-party vendor, Libera, Inc. The system is designed to keep the DVR in compliance with data collecting and reporting requirements of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and WIOA. The system collects, stores, and processes information into formats necessary to meet the needs of the following reports:

- RSA 113 Quarterly Reports;
- RSA 911 Annual Report;
- RSA 2 Annual Report.

DVR will work closely with other DWS divisions to ensure that appropriate system integration and data-sharing occurs to align resources, improve reporting processes and outcomes, and enhance the consumer's experience. The ultimate goal is to have the WIOA core programs working seamlessly together.

### **Adult Education and Family Literacy**

LACES by LiteracyPro is used by all local AE programs across the state. Vendor training provide Adult Education staff with the technical assistance necessary to effectively use the software, including diagnosis of data, report productions, performance reviews, data validation, and online technical assistance. Many features are built into the next version of the software. Three training sessions are held per year, with one offering specific assistance to individual programs with a strong emphasis on data quality.

The National Reporting System Guidelines are part of the training all local directors receive. Definitions, charts of educational functioning levels, assessments, and recommended procedures needed in data recording and reporting are included in this guidance. Aggregated data is reported through the National Reporting System portal to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career Technical and Adult Education.

AE includes students registered with Wyoming at Work as part of the induction/intake process for unemployed persons.

## 2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

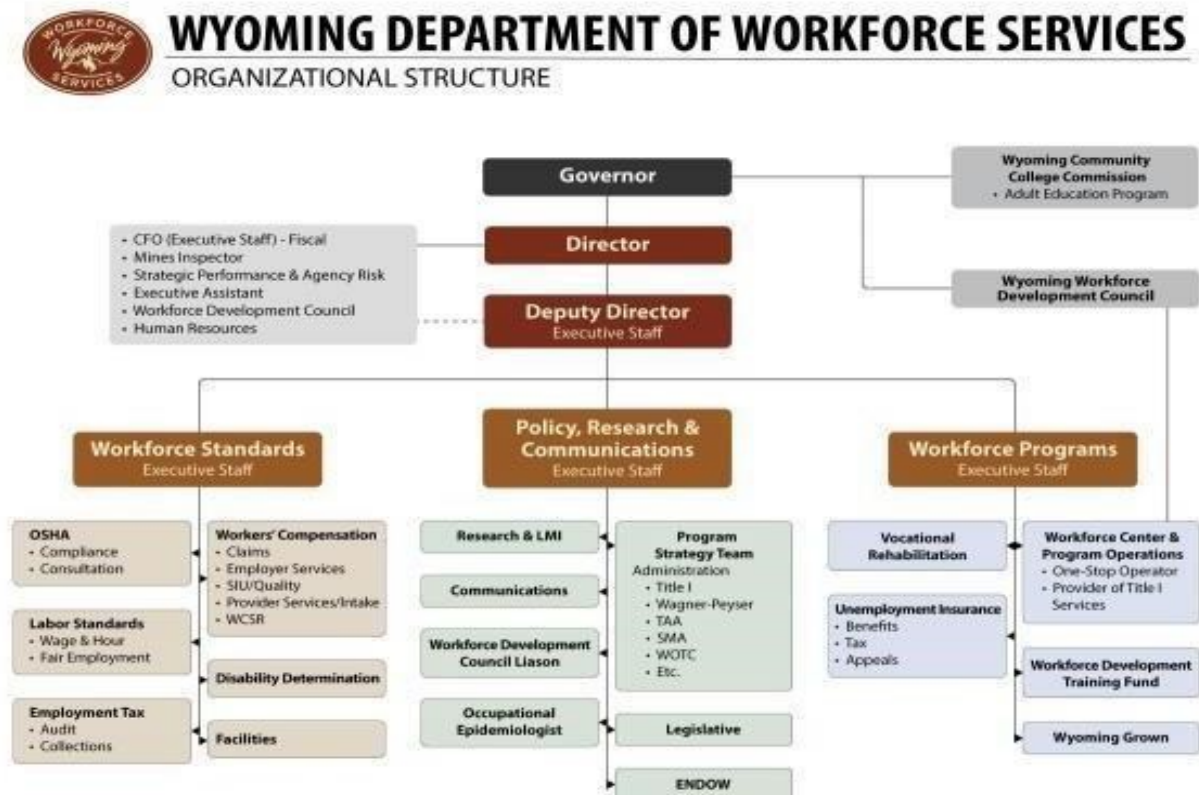
Ease of access will be provided to a catalog of resources, individual service summaries, and employment and post-secondary records.

One-Stop costs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the One-Stop Centers, including, but not limited to: Rental of facilities; Utilities & Maintenance; Equipment, including assessment-related products and assistive technology for individuals with disabilities; and Technology to facilitate access to the One-Stop Center, including technology used for the center's planning and outreach activities.

Each Partner's contributions to costs may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the Partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations and the Uniform Guidance.

## 3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

### A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION



The six core programs are housed within two different state agencies. Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs are housed in DWS. Adult Education and Family Literacy is housed in the WCCC.

Both agencies work closely with the WWDC. The WWDC advises the Governor on workforce priorities and initiatives while also overseeing workforce activities across the state. The WWDC works with DWS and the WCCC to continually redevelop and implement the federally mandated State Plan under WIOA. Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state; therefore, the WWDC serves as both the local board and the State board.

The WIOA Program Strategy Team administers DWS's portion of WIOA programs within the Policy, Research & Communications team in DWS. The One-Stops are overseen by a separate and distinct unit within the Office of Workforce Programs also housed in DWS.

#### **A. STATE BOARD**

The WWDC is a 30-member board charged with assisting the Governor in directing Wyoming's Workforce Development System, ensuring the system is fundamental in supporting robust regional and state economies and producing a high-quality, self-sufficient workforce valued by Wyoming employers. Members represent a range of groups that includes business and industry, organized labor, state Legislature, education, social service agencies, and others with a stake in employment and training issues. The WWDC regularly assesses Wyoming's employment needs, advises the Governor on setting performance goals and priorities to improve the Workforce Development System, and helps leaders to shape workforce development policy at the local level. The WIOA and the Governor have empowered the WWDC to promote, fund, and oversee Sector Strategies, Career Pathways, and Apprenticeships for the State of Wyoming.

As a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council has been appointed in accordance with Executive Order 2015-5.

#### **I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**

<b>Governor and State Legislature</b>		
Mark	Gordon	Governor
Fred	Baldwin	Legislature – Senate
Cathy	Connolly	Legislature – House
<b>Business</b>		
Fabian	Lobera	Pitch Engine – Board Chair
Eric	Trowbridge	Blue Federal Credit Union – Board Vice-Chair
Michelle	Butler	EMIT Technologies
Tony	Cross	Jackson Hole Airport
Alan	Daugherty	Western Wyoming Medical ASC
Jim	Engel	Engel & Associates
Katie	Legerski	Associated General Contractors
Mark	Madsen	WHS Engineering
Gary	New	NCAR
Dick	Smith	Cody Regional Health
Ron	Wild	Rocky Mountain Power
Nathan	Williams	Kennon Products
Larry	Fodor	Mechanical Systems, Inc.
Katie	Hogarty	Climb Wyoming
Travis	Lawrence	First Northern Bank of Wyoming
<b>Workforce</b>		
Phillip	Cornella	Wyoming Operating Engineers
Brenda	Morgan	Training Director, WEJATC

Tina	Conley	IReach2 – CBO PWD
Jim	Lish	Wyoming American Legion – CBO Veterans
Stacy	Strasser	Collaborative Consulting – CBO Youth
<b>Government</b>		
Robin	Cooley	Department of Workforce Services (Titles I & III)
Sandra	Caldwell	Wyoming Community College Commission (Title II)
Nicky	Harper	Department of Workforce Services (Title IV)
Matt	Hall	City Mayor
Robert	Short	County Commissioner
<b>Ex-Officio</b>		
Brian	Schroeder	Superintendent of Public Instruction
Josh	Dorrell	Wyoming Business Council
Korin	Schmidt	Department of Family Services

## BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Governor’s Executive Order 2015-5 revised the duties of the WWDC to include the provisions of WIOA and includes enhancing workforce development activities to help diversify Wyoming’s economy, creating a strategic plan not less than once every four years, developing and adopting operating rules for itself, and developing a yearly budget for itself.

The WWDC has continued to work from the Vision, Goals, and Strategies to meet Wyoming’s education, training, and employment needs. Each committee of the WWDC will be assigned applicable goals and strategies to continue work to ensure Wyoming’s workforce system fosters a vibrant Wyoming economy through collaborative, industry-led partnerships that provide diverse and comprehensive services to job seekers and employers. Efforts to meet the Vision began under the previous plan with the Next Generation Sector Partnerships Initiative, an effective way to begin meeting the workforce needs of Wyoming.

### 3. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

#### A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) evaluates each One-Stop Center’s outcomes using the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Sec. 116(b) by updating its Wyoming at Work online reporting system.

DWS uses a variety of assessment tools to evaluate and track program effectiveness and to promote a culture of continuous improvement, including:

- **Wyoming at Work Data/Reporting System** – Wyoming at Work enables One-Stop Centers and their partners to track WIOA Title I-B, TAA, Veteran, Wagner-Peyser, state and local programs, and discretionary grants in a single database. Reports generated from this system are “up to the minute,” which allows better management of daily activities and performance. In addition to federally-mandated reports, Wyoming at Work has a variety of reports that allow staff to track caseloads, correct data entry errors, and analyze performance at the state level.
- **Program Monitoring** – Department of Workforce Services (DWS) Program staff conduct quarterly reviews to determine progress to date on program goals and objectives related to the Wyoming State Plan and referenced in the proposals or applications for grant funds. DWS Program staff provide technical assistance both on a universal and customized level for individual programmatic needs, as deemed necessary based on quarterly reviews. Each Workforce Center is required to self-monitor on a quarterly basis a statistical sampling of files in each program to include completing official file monitoring documentation. File monitoring documentation is required and is provided to Program Staff to ensure complete and timely self-monitoring activities.

Core programs are monitored annually and assessed in accordance with WIOA, including performance indicators that measure employment, median earnings, credential attainment rate, measurable skill gains, and WWDC-selected employer measures that are employer retention (retention of an employee with the same employer) and repeat employer customer (percentage of employers who are using the core program services out of all employers represented in an area). Each program is responsible for maintaining an effective monitoring policy and procedures to ensure WIOA requirements are met.

The Wyoming Talent Transition Project will launch an outreach campaign to create a larger flow of adults seeking career changes to growing occupations and industries and to increase the ability of the workforce and education systems not only reach new populations, but also work together to help people receive the skills they need to transition to new jobs and careers in growing industries. especially those with Next Gen Partnerships. While many of Wyoming's Next Gen Partnerships have already helped inform the development of new education and training programs, and stronger connections among the workforce and education systems, as this outreach campaign increases the flow of interested jobseekers and career-changers, both systems will need to scale up their collaboration, working closely with industry. The overarching goal of the Wyoming Talent Transition Initiative is to help companies, workers, and communities benefit immediately, but also to demonstrate how Wyoming's state government and local institutions can work with the private sector to advance the economic vitality and diversification of the State's regions.

Progress will be assessed by evaluating the following:

- Increasing number of jobseekers and other transitioning workers successfully placed in careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Increasing number of people who enter into retraining or education to qualify for new careers in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Decreasing number of unfilled job openings in growing industries (health care, manufacturing, construction);
- Increasing diversification of the Wyoming economy as health care, manufacturing, and construction have access to the talent to grow and become a larger share of the State's economy; and
- Increasing incomes for Wyoming workers who make the transition to careers in growing industries.

#### **A. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS**

Wyoming is a single area state and, as such, does not have local and regional planning goals. Through Next Generation Sector Partnerships, local and regional planning is encouraged, and the Next Generation Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways Committee will establish monitoring (assessment) requirements. Each program partner is responsible for maintaining an effective monitoring policy and procedures to ensure WIOA requirements are being met.

#### **A. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

##### **Economic Analysis**

Wyoming endured unprecedented job losses in 2020, in large part because of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly declining energy prices. Over the year, Wyoming lost more than 16,000 jobs, and total wages decreased by more than \$500 million.

As a result of these changes, Wyoming entered its third period of economic downturn in recent years (see Table 1 and Figures 1a and 1b). The Research & Planning (R&P) Unit of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has defined an *economic downturn* as a period of at least two consecutive quarters of over-the-year decline in both average monthly employment and total wages based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

The two previous downturns were preceded by declining energy prices. The first downturn lasted five quarters, from the first quarter of 2009 (2009Q1) to the first quarter of 2010 (2010Q1) and closely followed the national

Great Recession (referred to in this report as the *2009 economic downturn*). The second downturn lasted seven quarters, from 2015Q2 to 2016Q4, the result of a sharp decline in the demand for and cost of natural resources such as coal, oil, and natural gas (referred to as the *2015 economic downturn* in this report).

The *2020 economic downturn* began in 2020Q2 and lasted at least through 2020Q4, the most recent period for which data were available at the time this report was written. The 2020 downturn was driven in large part by job losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wyoming's leisure & hospitality industry was hit especially hard by the pandemic, as average monthly employment dropped to a 20-year low in 2020Q2. However, the 2020 downturn was similar to the two previous downturns, in that this downturn was also preceded by declining energy prices and employment: job losses in mining began before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2020Q4 marked the sixth consecutive quarter of over-the-year job losses.

The tables and figures referenced in this document are available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA\\_State\\_Plan\\_Tables\\_2022.pdf](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/WIOA_State_Plan_Tables_2022.pdf).

### **Existing Demand Sectors and Occupations**

Industries are classified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Broad sectors are given a two-digit NAICS code, such as mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21) and construction (NAICS 23). Within each two-digit sector are several three-digit subsectors, four-digit industries, five-digit detailed industries, and six-digit detailed national industries. For example, three subsectors are placed within mining: oil & gas extraction (NAICS 21); mining, except oil & gas (NAICS 22); and support activities for mining (NAICS 213). A variety of six-digit national detailed industries are found in each sector; for example, in construction are such detailed industries as new single-family housing construction (NAICS 236115); industrial building construction (NAICS 236210); and oil & gas pipeline construction (NAICS 237120).

More information about the NAICS structure is available at <https://www.census.gov/naics/?99967>.

Wyoming's economy is driven by the health of mining, including oil & gas (NAICS 21). Economic expansion occurs when demand for and prices of oil, coal, and natural are high. Conversely, economic contraction takes place when demand for and prices of these resources wane.

As previously stated, Wyoming's recent economic downturns were preceded by declining energy prices.

Overall, employment decreased from 277,115 in 2019 to 260,880 in 2020 (-16,235, or -5.9%; see Table 2). Job losses were seen in nearly all industry sectors, led by leisure & hospitality (-4,778, or -12.9%) and mining (-4,441, or -21.4%). These two industries combined accounted for 61.4% of all jobs lost in Wyoming; in other words, nearly two out of every three jobs lost were in mining or in leisure & hospitality.

While most industries experienced over-the-year declines in employment throughout 2020, some growth occurred at the subsector (three-digit NAICS) level. For this plan, *existing demand industries* were defined as those with employment levels increasing by 5% or more for two consecutive quarters (in this case, 2020Q3 and 2020Q4) based on R&P's Growing and Declining Industries Report for 2020Q4. Only subsectors with average quarterly employment sizes of 100 or more were included in this analysis. R&P identified five such existing demand industries that met these criteria (see Table 3): crop production (NAICS 111); building material & garden supply stores (NAICS 444); general merchandise stores (NAICS 452); couriers & messengers (NAICS 492); and national security & international affairs (NAICS 928).

Existing demand occupations were identified using the New Hires Job Skills Survey (*New Hires Survey*), which is conducted by R&P on a quarterly basis, based on a sample of new hires. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about jobs that are filled in the state, such as occupation, typical job duties, wages and benefits, license and certification requirements, necessary job skills, employers' satisfaction with their new hires' skills, and more. By linking New Hires Survey data with several administrative databases, R&P can identify demographics of new hires, such as gender and age. New Hires Survey results are published annually and contain a wealth of information about the state's job and labor markets. For more information, please see <https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/newhires.htm>.



The most current New Hires Survey data available is from 2018, when Wyoming had 94,075 new hires. The majority of all new hires worked in occupations with no formal educational requirement (50.6%) or in occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent (31.2%); together, these two categories accounted for 81.8% of all new hires. The remaining 17,094 new hires (18.2%) worked in occupations that required some education beyond a high school diploma, from some college courses or a post-secondary certificate to a master's degree or doctoral degree.

Table 4 provides a list of the top five most frequently occurring new hire occupations that require some post-secondary education in 2018. The occupations in Table 4 that require less than an associate's degree could be seen as *existing demand occupations* for which training could be completed relatively quickly. For example, occupations that require a post-secondary non-degree award (certificate) include truck drivers, bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks, nursing assistants, teaching assistants, and medical assistants.

### **Emerging demand industry sectors and occupations**

Emerging demand industries and occupations were identified using R&P's most recent short-term industry and occupational projections for 2020Q1 to 2022Q1, available online at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY\\_ST\\_Projections\\_2020-2022.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY_ST_Projections_2020-2022.htm).

For the purposes of this state plan, R&P identified *emerging demand industries* as subsectors (three-digit NAICS) with projected growth of at least 5.0% and 20 jobs from 2020Q1 to 2022Q1. Six subsectors met these criteria to be considered emerging industries (see Table 5): crop production (NAICS 111); animal production (NAICS 112); building material & garden equipment & supplies dealers (NAICS 444); couriers & messengers (NAICS 492); warehousing & storage (NAICS 493); and ambulatory health care services (NAICS 621). Of these six subsectors, the greatest growth was projected for ambulatory health care services (469, or 4.6%) and building material & garden equipment & supplies dealers (162, or 4.9%).

For this unified state plan, R&P has listed 25 emerging demand occupations by identifying the top five occupations with the greatest number of projected openings from 2020 to 2022 for each educational requirement (see Table 6). Occupational projections include three types of openings: *growth* (new jobs), *exits* (persons leaving the workforce), and *transfers* (persons changing occupations).

The vast majority (72.7%) of openings are projected in occupations that require a high school diploma or less (see Figure 2). The occupations with the greatest number of total openings for this educational requirement included cashiers (2,219); retail salespersons (2,208); combined food preparation & serving workers (1,967); waiters & waitresses (1,876); and office clerks, general (1,422). Many of these occupations are relatively low-paying jobs with high turnover rates that are often found in industries such as retail trade and leisure & hospitality.

Occupations requiring some college and no degree or a post-secondary certificate accounted for 8.8% of all projected openings from 2020Q1 to 2022Q1. These included occupations such as heavy & tractor-trailer truck drivers (1,059 openings), nursing assistants (860), and bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks (613).

Occupations requiring an associate's degree made up 2.1% of all projected openings. Occupations in this category included preschool teachers, excluding special education (168 openings), forest & conservation technicians (126), paralegals & legal assistants (112), and computer network support specialists (61).

The second-largest group of projected occupations required a bachelor's degree (13.6% of all projected openings). The occupations in this category varied, with the greatest number of openings projected for general & operations managers (720), registered nurses (662), elementary school teachers except special education (417), and accountants & auditors (348), among other occupations.

Occupations requiring a master's, doctoral, or professional degree accounted for just 2.8% of all projected openings. These included such occupations as educational, guidance, school, & vocational counselors (148 openings), lawyers (91), education administrators, elementary & secondary school (74), clinical, counseling, & school psychologists (71), and nurse practitioners (66).

A full list of short-term projections of all occupations is available at [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY\\_ST\\_Projections\\_2020-2022.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/projections/2021/WY_ST_Projections_2020-2022.htm)

An assessment of this data reinforces Wyoming's current priority on continuing with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council's Next Generation Sector Partnerships. These partnerships will be instrumental in solving Wyoming's future projections for a decline in Mining. Committees of the Next Generation Sector Partnership are working on surveys to connect a Talent Transition to Rapid Response for an enhanced effort toward keeping our population, especially youth, from leaving the state. The Wyoming Talent Transition Project will launch an outreach campaign to create a larger flow of adults seeking career changes to growing occupations and industries and to increase the ability of the workforce and education systems not only reach new populations, but also work together to help people receive the skills they need to transition to new jobs and careers in growing industries. especially those with Next Gen Partnerships.

A Youth Collaborative Group was established after evaluation and assessments for low WIOA youth enrollment, and the group is still going strong with great success for the new Natrona County WIOA Youth Program. Partners, especially Community Colleges and Adult Education, have been instrumental in the Wyoming Educational Attainment Taskforce to design strategies to assist with reaching a 67% credential and certificate attainment rate by 2025.

During programmatic monitoring compliance visits, assessments were made on gaps in training, and a modified training plan was rolled out. The new training plan strategy encompassed visiting each American Job Center instead of using a large-group training approach. The interactive approach helped to open the lines of communication and gave staff the forum to voice areas of concern and identify priority areas of technical assistance they need for their professional development. Additional Case Management training was offered and completed by Workforce Center staff, including the Case Manager Conference in Florida. The new training plan strategy was completed in eighteen months. The results and continuous improvements have been documented in the minimum Work Experience expenditures and increase of Youth Credential Attainment Rate.

An additional need identified in the assessments was the addition of a myriad of training to the toolkit. Training consists of the following:

- **New Hire Introduction to Wagner-Peyser and WIOA** – This short introduction for case managers working with the WP and WIOA programs provides a basic overview of these programs and required partners. WIOA eligibility and participant services are discussed, and resources and tools shared. Confidentiality and the importance of people-first communication are emphasized. Performance measures and relevant data will also be discussed.
- **Wagner Peyser/Wyoming at Work 101** – Individuals learn how to use Wyoming at Work to assist job seekers on how to register, add skills, complete the interest profiler, build resumes and virtual recruiters, view labor market information, and complete a thorough job search. The [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com) online job-matching system will be reviewed, highlighting the available resources (Allison, ETPL). Additional job searching tools are provided and discussed.
- **WIOA 101** – Individuals learn the eligibility requirements for WIOA participants, including dates of application, eligibility, and participation. Much time is spent on the step-by-step process of WIOA. This training covers the Wagner-Peyser (WP) application and services for WP and WIOA. Information is provided on how to set up alerts and pull WIOA case management reports. A WIOA file review is completed to emphasize WIOA monitoring and data validation.
- **WIOA 201** – Individuals learn more about WIOA forms (how to complete and when to use). The hands-on approach continues with the creation of objective assessments and plans, agreements, and vouchers. Specific time is designated for creation and discussion of Work Experiences and On-the-Job Training for WIOA participants.
- **WIOA Case Management** – Individuals will learn the core elements and process of case management, how to appropriately document/case note contact versus service delivery, and understand activities and services in relation to case management.

Training is offered at one of three Wyoming locations on a quarterly basis and will include other partners in the future.

#### **A. EVALUATION**

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services Program and Performance Team conducts annual programmatic compliance monitoring of the WIOA programs at the American Job Centers (AJC). WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth files will be sampled during a case file review that includes interactive technical assistance to ensure compliance with federal WIOA regulations and DWS WIOA policy and procedures. Results and recommendations of the monitoring are reviewed with the AJC managers, Workforce Specialists, and One-Stop Operator. A report identifying deficiencies and recommendations for improvement is disseminated. Corrective action may be recommended. This monitoring enables AJC Managers to readily see how well the American Job Centers are performing.

American Job Centers are performing in case management and where improvements are needed. Desk reviews by AJC Managers include regular monitoring of participant WIOA expenditures. The process of monitoring expenditures includes allocations from all the monthly payments made on behalf of WIOA participants to ensure on track with expending funds within the program year. The results of the review are documented on the monitoring form, and a copy is maintained in the WIOA case file. As necessary, AJC Managers will perform regular follow-up to ensure any areas of concern are corrected for resolution.

WIOA data element validation verifies the accuracy of WIOA participant data used to generate the WIOA performance reports. A report on the results of the WIOA data element validation review will be issued each year. The Performance Team shares performance measures and annual outcomes with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

Data for program evaluation is collected using various methods, including surveys (telephone), public forums, site reviews, grant reports, customer satisfaction surveys, and performance indicators. This information is analyzed by management; if appropriate, it is shared with American Job Center staff, service providers, grantees, federal funding agencies, legislature, clients, and others. The analysis is used to assess unmet client needs, improve services, and to guide the Division in planning its future focus and direction. The information is also used to assess and forecast the training needs of the Division's staff through various offerings such as conference calls, in-person training, and video google hangout training. Lastly, the core partners share performance measures and annual outcomes with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

### **3. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

#### **A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS**

##### **I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)**

Wyoming follows WIOA Sec. 128(b)(2)(A)(i) to allocate funding for Youth Program activities. The data used in computing allotments include:

- The average number of unemployed individuals for the preceding 12-month period;
- The number of excess unemployed individuals for the preceding 12-month period; and
- The number of economically disadvantaged youth (age 16 to 21, excluding college students in the workforce and military).

The State applies the 90% "hold harmless" provision contained in WIOA, Section 128(b)(2)(A)(ii).

##### **II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)**

Wyoming follows WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2)(A)(i) to allocate formula funding for Adult Program activities. The data used in computing allotments include:

- The average number of unemployed individuals for the preceding 12-month period;
- The number of excess unemployed individuals for the preceding 12-month period; and

- The number of economically disadvantaged adults (age 18 to 72, excluding college students in the workforce and military).

The State applies the 90% “hold harmless” provision contained in WIOA, Section 128(b)(2)(A)(ii).

### **III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED**

Wyoming is a Single Area State that is not required to follow standard data factors. However, Dislocated Worker funds are distributed to American Job Centers based on a formula allocation. The formula was developed in partnership with the state agency, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), local elected officials, and approved by the WWDC. The determining factors used in the calculation are Labor Force Data, Unemployment Data, Population, and Poverty Data within the counties to determine a percentage for funding allocation to each of the American Job Centers.

#### **A. FOR TITLE II**

##### **I. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING HOW ELIGIBLE AGENCIES WILL ESTABLISH THAT ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS**

The WCCC is the eligible agency that administers the Adult Education and Family Literacy grant funding and provides oversight and technical assistance to local programs while monitoring performance.

Adult Education and literacy providers approved under the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014 that were funded in the 2020/21 grant year will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2025. They are expected to follow the State and federal guidance and expectations as measured through the annual applications, financial reports, and their program performance in meeting the state negotiated targets approved by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE).

In January 2020, the WCCC implemented a new grant competition for 2020-25, with 2020-21 being the first grant year of the new funding cycle. WCCC advertised the request-for-proposals (RFP) as a five-year renewable grant to all eligible providers in Wyoming for the purpose of developing, implementing, and providing adult education across the State. The same RFP was posted electronically on the WCCC website and advertised in newspapers across the State.

The same announcement procedure will be used for all future competitions for Adult Education. The thirteen considerations in awarding grants (WIOA Sec. 231(e)) will be included in the proposal, in the readers’ rubrics, and will be used in awarding the grants. Programs must also show alignment to Statewide economic and educational initiatives to upscale educational efforts to train Wyoming residents.

Presently, these initiatives include:

- Next Generation Sector Partnerships: the Wyoming Workforce Development Council entered into a partnership to launch Next Generation Sector Partnership projects around the State in an effort to grow critical economic sectors and to form an alignment with many education, workforce training, economic development, and government partners;
- Educational Attainment Initiative aims to increase the percentage of the working population that possesses a valuable post-secondary credential to 67% by 2025;

State Appropriations for Grant Programs include:

- Wyoming Works: 2019 State legislation to provide grants for:
  - adult students to advance their skills in areas that lead to secure employment;
  - Wyoming Community Colleges to develop stackable credential programs and other in-demand credential programs of study.

Organizations eligible to apply must have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals. These organizations may include a local education agency, a community-or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition of agencies organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

The State will review Demonstrated Effectiveness by reviewing two-year trends in performance data in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language. Applications that meet the 'Demonstrated Effectiveness' requirement will be further screened for review, scoring, and consideration of funding. Applications that do not result in a determination that the application was from an organization of demonstrated effectiveness will not be further considered for funding and will be notified within five days of being deemed ineligible.

Previously funded applicants under WIOA were required to provide performance data under section 116 to demonstrate effectiveness in the aforementioned skill areas. An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving Basic Skills Deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in § 463.24.

The WCCC uses a performance-based funding allocation model in the distribution of federal and state grant funds. The allocation model considers the following elements: enrollment, high-school dropout rate, poverty level, rural/isolated areas, performance, and target populations.

To ensure that potential new programs have the background and experience to include services tailored for Wyoming's main AE population, programs were required to submit:

- Four years of history on the organization's management of grants;
- An organizational chart depicting Adult Education;
- The name of a qualified candidate to hold the position of Director for Adult Education for the applicant's institution; and
- The names and qualifications of instructors.

The request for proposals also required a description of the project management, which will help to ensure successful outcomes.

Each prospective provider was requested to provide data demonstrating their capacity to serve eligible AE program students and the providers' previous effectiveness in helping students make educational gains.

Intensity and duration of instruction were considered as program applications were reviewed. Quality instruction, including the Essential Components of Reading, must be provided by high-quality instructors to ensure programs meet negotiated performance targets.

## **II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS**

Requests for proposals will be issued once per cycle, and the same announcement will be used in advertising the request for proposals, both electronically and in print. All applicants for Adult Education funds will use the same form for a response.

Direct and equitable access will be ensured by requesting that all applicants, prior recipients, and new applicants provide data demonstrating their ability to help students make a measurable learning gain. Prior recipients will use data from LACES to show how they met state-negotiated performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English Language learners. New organizations will be provided with forms to

show demonstrated student learning gain, including low-literacy levels and English language learners. Applicants will also be required to explain how they will demonstrate that students have the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to post-secondary education, skill training, or employment.

#### **A. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM**

Vocational Rehabilitation General (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (Older Blind) are one combined Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Designated State Unit) that operates under the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (Designated State Agency).

### **3. PROGRAM DATA**

#### **A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION**

Wyoming continues to work toward data alignment and integration across the six core programs and the state's education systems. Several core programs and future combined plan programs are already integrated from an intake, case management, and reporting perspective. The integrated programs are Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Trade Adjustment Assistance, MSFWs, and Veterans. Presently, management information systems are not fully interoperable. However, for research purposes, including evaluation, Research & Planning's data either is or will be integrated across Social Security numbers and student identifiers for descriptive analysis and predictive and explanatory purposes. Research & Planning obtains student records, including personally identifiable information, from all of the public education for research and evaluation, including WIOA purposes. Employer information is collected quarterly from UI and workers' compensation records. Administrative records for research purposes are collected on a weekly, quarterly, semester, and annual basis. WIOA participant records are acquired quarterly, while Vocational Rehabilitation and AE are collected annually. AE and Vocational Rehabilitation records will be collected on a quarterly basis.

Research & Planning's established data collection and management system will be sustained by DWS to evaluate performance, provide user-friendly information, and enhance knowledge about the workforce system. Research & Planning data collection and management systems will also be used under WIOA to meet longitudinal tracking and evaluation research requirements.

WWDC will work in conjunction with DWS and the Community College Commission to provide research and recommendations to the Governor regarding technology alignment across the mandatory One-Stop partner programs. This will be an extension of Wyoming's "no wrong door" philosophy, which enables customers across all of the core programs and mandatory partners to experience a streamlined and more seamless service delivery model.

The core programs' management information systems operate with vendor-managed solutions. Each vendor is contractually responsible to develop and provide the required data outputs for federal performance accountability reporting under WIOA.

#### **A. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS**

In addition to the required federal reports, the core programs plan to work with the Research & Planning section to further assess participants' post-program success. All datasets in the Research & Planning's system of administrative records are either linked longitudinally or are consistently linked for longitudinal analysis on a project-by-project basis. Quarterly and weekly UI administrative records are maintained from 1992 and are updated weekly and quarterly.

Cohort analysis of nurses employed in the state dates to 2001, while student records for cohort analysis are available from 2006 to the most recent semester. The strategy of longitudinal cohort analysis will be carried into the implementation of WIOA and focus on program participants and the balance of Wyoming's population by demographic characteristic workforce participation and earnings.

DWS will use the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance to assess the immediate progress of participants from core programs, comply with federally directed WIOA evaluations, and will, on occasion, conduct evaluations of longer-term outcomes for program participants. Such evaluations will assess a participant's

employment status, earnings, or educational achievement beyond the established timelines that are incorporated into the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance. The Performance data team will assess the best use of data and establish reports to assess post-program success. The report results will be evaluated and focus on identifying successful service delivery strategies.

#### **A. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA**

DWS continues to obtain and use quarterly Unemployment Insurance wage records for performance accountability and as a source for workforce and labor market information. Additionally, DWS used the WRIS system and is now connected and actively using the SWIS wage data system to supplement available Wyoming Unemployment Insurance wage records.

#### **A. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS**

DWS implements multiple layers of security to meet state and federal data compliance measures and policies and to protect client information from unauthorized access or disclosure and possible misuse or abuse. DWS uses the latest Internet technology standards to encrypt and secure all Web application traffic. Client Social Security numbers submitted through Web applications are obfuscated during receipt in the database. Servers housing the databases containing Social Security Numbers are “single-purpose restricted” to cleared system administrators. All database backups are encrypted using the most current standards. Only authorized DWS program staff can view applicant/trainee information through a highly secure software interface. Authorized staff members are instructed on the appropriate handling and protection of this data by their management or designated representative.

DWS is working closely with the WCCC to obtain direction from the Office of Career Technical and AE. When clarification is issued by that office, the WCCC will share the guidance with DWS so those requirements may be implemented to comply with all applicable Federal laws. The staff of the WCCC is in frequent contact with DWS’s Office of Workforce Programs.

UI will safeguard wage and other data by following applicable State and Federal Laws and Regulations. The most detailed and determinative of these regulations is 20 C.F.R. § 603. UI will follow the safeguards and security requirements for disclosed information. In addition, UI will require all entities who successfully obtain a data-sharing agreement with UI to enter into a memorandum of understanding or another equally binding instrument to ensure that the regulatory and statutory safeguards are maintained. This will include, but not be limited to, requiring the recipient to safeguard the information disclosed, allow UI to audit the recipient to ensure compliance with the agreement, and limit or prohibit disclosure of confidential information.

DVR adheres to 34 C.F.R. Part 361.38 with regard to the disclosure of client data. All clients, applicants, or client representatives shall be informed of the DVR’s need to collect certain personal information and policies governing its use and confidentiality. All client or applicant information acquired as a part of the rehabilitation process shall remain the property of the DVR and is strictly confidential. Client information shall only be used for purposes directly related to the administration of the individual’s vocational rehabilitation program. This information cannot be shared with anyone except DVR staff without the client’s informed written consent.

All Research & Planning Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) (see web link located here: [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/education\\_we\\_connect.htm](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/education_we_connect.htm)) involving personally identifiable information or employer records meet all requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Privacy Act, 20 C.F.R. Part 603, and all domain-specific (e.g., medical board or board of nursing) state and federal statutes, rules, and data donor standards regarding confidentiality. Confidentiality is further ensured by limiting staff access to confidential information, federal and State confidentiality and security standards training, exposure to strategies to maximize richly detailed publication while employing standard screening techniques, and by a culture of confidentiality and security within the Research & Planning section. Security must meet the National Institute of Standards and Technology requirements, including a program of external audits.

The AE program follows FERPA for all student records. FERPA, a federal law that guards the privacy of student education records, is applied to all schools that receive funds under any applicable programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA also affords certain rights to parents with respect to their child's education records. These rights are offered to the student when the student reaches the age of 18 or enters schooling beyond the high school level. Any student who receives these rights is deemed an "eligible student" under FERPA.

AE staff requires written permission from the eligible student or guardian on a release-of-information form before any student's records can be shared. Certain exceptions under FERPA permit an academic institution to disclose certain types of "directory" information. However, a student or guardian has the right to request this information not be disclosed. The AE staff is trained on the privacy rights of their students.

### **3. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS**

Each One-Stop has posted information visible through signage and posters to all clients describing Priority of Service to notify all that Priority of Service is in place. All staff have been trained in Priority of Service and act to identify qualified veterans during intake, including an intake form to capture veterans. Staff members are trained to ask if the client is a veteran and, if so, to provide labor exchange services that include employment, training, and placement services to qualified veterans. Reminders of Priority of Service are distributed to all staff through conference calls, staff meetings through capacity building, emails, in person, and when JVSG program staff meets with One-Stop staff during outreach. Wyoming at Work has an emphasis on Veterans' Priority of Service, thereby providing opportunities so that veterans and their spouses know this priority exists.

Priority of Service to Veterans is implemented in several ways:

- Veteran Priority of Service describes the right of eligible covered individuals to take precedence over eligible non-covered individuals in obtaining services. The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person. If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before an equally qualified non-covered person;
- Covered individuals include a veteran or eligible spouse;
- A Veteran, for purposes of Priority of Service, is a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active service includes full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full-time duty for training purposes;
- An eligible spouse is defined as the spouse of any of the following:
  - Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
  - Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the Priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days;
    - Missing in action;
    - Captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
    - Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
    - Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and
    - Any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.
- Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:
  1. To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public



assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA Adult formula funds.

2. To non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Adult formula funds.
  3. To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
  4. To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.
- Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities, and older workers.

A veteran initially assessed by Wagner-Peyser staff through a checklist for significant barriers to employment can also be offered a referral to a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist for comprehensive assessment and the provision of intensive services. Specialists assess client needs, determine eligibility for appropriate occupational skills or educational programs, and determine appropriate funding sources. If a veteran is found to be eligible for referral to JVSG staff because of existing SBEs, an appointment is made for the eligible veteran to meet with a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist. At this initial meeting, the DVOP will conduct an Objective Assessment, work with the veteran to develop an Individual Employment Plan, and enroll the SBE veteran in case management.

Business Service Teams conduct outreach activities, and public information is provided at numerous state expositions, job fairs, association conventions, and via employer contacts for job development and job placement matches for the avocation of hiring Veterans.

Partnerships for transition assistance and reintegration are strong with the Veterans Administration and state Vocational Rehabilitation Program, homeless programs, reintegration organizations, and F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

To ensure Priority of Service compliance, the State Veterans Coordinator will review requirements of Priority of Service with their staff concerning Priority of Service on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring the implementation of priority of service will be completed by the State Veterans Coordinator to ensure eligible veterans and eligible spouses are made aware of and afforded priority of service. The State Veterans Coordinator is responsible for training all staff on priority of service and will assist in coordinating review activities within the state as well as provide reports and access records on priority of service. The State Veterans Coordinator will conduct on-site technical assistance visits to monitor priority of service. Local office managers will monitor priority of service on a daily basis to ensure it is implemented within their respective One-Stops by promoting ongoing case management, referrals of Significant Barriers to Employment clients to DVOPs, job fairs, etc. The State Veterans Coordinator will review reports on a quarterly basis for each One-Stop to ensure priority of service is implemented and to identify if any issues exist.

### **3. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Please see Appendix 2 – WWDC Policy 5-Certification

### **4. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Within the AJCs, the staff ensures all English Language Learners receive, free of charge, the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to the programs, services, and information offered to all customers. Language assistance is achieved through the skills of bilingual staff as well as the availability of interpretive language phone lines that are available free of charge to any individual who needs or requests such services.

On-site Wagner-Peyser services are readily available to individuals with limited English proficiency. Employment and Training personnel regularly meet, discuss programmatic needs, and network on work opportunities and job readiness. Good relationships exist between the Employment and Training and the other program staff, based on efforts at the State and particularly the local level. Many organizations are continuously working to improve information sharing.

DWS also coordinates with outside partners to serve the needs of individuals with limited English. Emphasizing growing partnerships with Adult Education and Family Literacy will continue, with a focus on serving those individuals who may be functioning at a lower educational level while providing concurrent services intended to increase their work readiness skills.

Individuals with limited English proficiency are encouraged to participate in the other programs described in this plan. As a targeted population, such people will be served whenever and wherever opportunities are available.

#### **IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS**

Wyoming programs work together both on an ad-hoc basis and through various scheduled meetings. Currently, the core program committees meet weekly. Communication flows through various means, including telephone, email, and during meetings allowing for joint planning and coordination. Additionally, the programs have specified methods of referral, ensuring services are coordinated.

#### **V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)**

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	<b>Include</b>
1. The State has established a policy that identifies circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member or the entity or class of officials that the member represents and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4.(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to comply with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development, or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

## VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

#### A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

##### 1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to establishing regions. Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to designating local areas. Wyoming has been designated as a single-area state and is not subject to designating local areas.

See Appendix 3 – Wyoming’s Infrastructure Funding Agreement

##### 2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

Applicable state laws and policies will guide decision-making related to the Workforce Development System. Wyoming will use the Governor’s Vision and Goals as guidance for the statewide Workforce Development System. The Governor’s vision is:

**Vision:** Wyoming’s Workforce System fosters a vibrant Wyoming economy through collaborative, industry-led partnerships that provide diverse and comprehensive services to job seekers and employers.

**Mission:** Develop a quality and diverse workforce to meet the needs of Wyoming employers.

#### Goals:

- **Goal #1:** Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System.

#### Strategies:

- Develop a comprehensive outreach plan to promote opportunities available from various One-Stop partners;
  - Improve career pathways through coordination of education and training efforts among One-Stop partners; and
  - Prepare and respond to the changing employment landscape through leveraging integrated partnerships.
- **Goal #2:** Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts.

**Strategies:**

- Explore new resources and use those already available through One-Stop partners to promote the One-Stop System;
  - Oversee the development and implementation of cross-training opportunities across One-Stop partners to increase awareness of the Workforce Development System;
  - Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan emphasizing increased communication among One-Stop partners;
  - Explore ways to highlight the personal impacts of the One-Stop System; and
  - Promote the WWDC's strategic planning efforts to highlight achievements.
- **Goal #3: Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers.**

**Strategies:**

- Leverage the Wyoming Grown program to encourage Wyoming natives to return to the state to live and work;
  - Establish mechanisms to identify the specific support and resource needs of employers and job-seekers to streamline services;
  - Implement One-Stop enhancements to provide expanded outreach beyond One-Stop Centers;
  - Coordinate with Wyoming employers to strategize ways to recruit out-of-state job seekers; and
  - Coordinate with One-Stop partners to provide skill development opportunities for in-demand and emerging jobs.
- **Goal #4: Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources.**

**Strategies:**

- Use Next Gen Sector Partnerships to better coordinate One-Stop efforts;
  - Integrate training efforts across partners to ensure consistency and increase efficiency;
  - Evaluate and strengthen One-Stop partnerships with government agencies to implement seamless wrap-around services; and
  - Ensure effective and efficient coordination among One-Stop Centers and partners to maximize resources and integrate outreach efforts.
- **Goal #5: Use the Career Pathways System to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries.**

**Strategies:**

- Expand internal and external efforts to identify and place qualified participants into training programs aligned with career pathways;
- Evaluate mechanisms to promote career pathways to key One-Stop partners;
- Explore opportunities to expand apprenticeships, internships, and mentor programs for those in rural and urban areas;
- Use the Career Pathways System to attract out-of-state youth to Wyoming and encourage existing Wyoming youth to stay in the State; and
- Leverage One-Stop partnerships to prepare the next generation of the Wyoming workforce through youth-specific opportunities.

Guidance for the use of some state funds for state-funded workforce investment activities are provided by the Wyoming Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) as a state-funded workforce development tool. All state funding shall be used in line with and per the guidance provided by the WWDC.

Governor's set-aside funding is provided to the WWDC and is used to carry out the required activities and allowable projects that are identified on an ongoing basis by the WWDC.

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council also plans to use the Governor's set-aside funding primarily on the continuation of the WWDC's state-wide sector partnership effort and logistical costs for Workforce Development Council meetings.

In Wyoming, Rapid Response teams are organized by the local AJCs for each community and situation. The teams consist of agency and community members as applicable. Should aversion efforts be unsuccessful, the Rapid Response Program serves employers and employees where announced business closures and layoffs occur. Rapid Response is conducted by the local AJCs, in coordination with the UI and community services, to assist affected employees as requested by employers. Response team services may include:

- Information and direct reemployment services available for workers include, but are not limited to: Information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims, information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and support for filing petitions, information on the impacts of layoffs on health coverage or other benefits, information on and referral to career services, reemployment focused workshops and services, and training, including Adult Education Program activities.
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition are provided across the business lifecycle and include comprehensive business engagement. Strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize layoffs are also available.
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating connections, networks, and partners are used to help dislocated workers and their families locate assistance that includes home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice.
- Rapid Response services also are offered to employers during natural disasters. Initial coordination is accomplished with the State-level Office of Homeland Security to consolidate services. Local Rapid Response teams are available to assist dislocated workers. DWS plans to enhance disaster response efforts with the addition of a mobile Rapid Response unit that will be centrally located in the State.
- Assessments for possible national dislocated worker grants are accomplished after coordination with the State-level Office of Homeland Security to eliminate duplication of effort.

Rapid Response activities are designed to help trade-affected workers find new jobs as quickly as possible after layoffs. Wyoming's Rapid Response teams provide all trade-affected workers with comprehensive information regarding the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program and benefits, including training opportunities and trade readjustment allowance benefits. This information is provided to workers at the business location, or to individuals at an AJC. The information may be provided in brochures, presentations, or during interviews. Once initial TAA petition information is received, UI provides verification of eligibility, and TAA program services may begin. DWS staff provide an initial program overview and appropriate career and training services to the affected TAA participant. Co-enrollment with Wagner-Peyser and WIOA is required to ensure additional support services for maximum participant outcomes.

## **B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS**

On-the-Job Training (OJT) remains a training strategy for applicants who lack experience but have education or training related to the job or whose limited experience does not qualify them for the job. OJTs are used to teach a participant specialized skills and competencies needed to perform a specific job at a worksite with a possible chance for advancement. The participating business has a major investment in the OJT process as they assist in completing a training plan and are the employer of record.

These efforts have shown to increase the competitiveness of employers in their designated markets while creating an internal workforce whose skills are assisting the employer to remain competitive with skilled workforce and increased worker tenure. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization.

Increased promotion and outreach efforts have resulted in additional OJT experiences for job seekers and businesses. With the DOL Apprenticeship Accelerator grant, the focus was placed on establishing a workforce strategy to identify workforce needs and skills within the health care, energy, manufacturing, and information technology industries. Using a sector strategy model, increased awareness for and development of Registered Apprenticeships with OJT components has occurred in the State.

Customized training provides training that is specific to an employers' (or group of employers') specific requirements so that the employer will hire individuals after successful completion of training. Customized training is designed to provide local areas with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of job seekers and employers or groups of employers. These types of activities are effective training models for both youth and adult populations. Hands-on training in a work environment allows individuals to gain not only the transferable skills needed in employment but also the additional soft skills that employers require.

Transitional jobs provide a time-limited work experience that is combined with comprehensive employment and supportive services. This work-based learning activity is for individuals with barriers to employment, who are chronically unemployed, or who have an inconsistent work history. The purpose is to support individuals with services to establish a work history, demonstrate success in a work environment, and develop skills to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

## **1. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP**

Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers and are most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. Registered Apprenticeship programs automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:

- Employers who provide related instruction;
- Employers who use an outside educational provider;
- Joint apprenticeship training programs; and
- Intermediaries.

Workforce Specialists work to strengthen partnerships and provide orientations before a new program with Registered Apprenticeship programs. These relationships continue to grow with the momentum of the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative.

DWS was awarded \$641K in US DOL discretionary funds to expand apprenticeship opportunities statewide from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. The work plan for Wyoming includes the following goals: strategic planning to fully integrate apprenticeship programs into State workforce development, education and economic development strategies; outreach and communication to elevate apprenticeship importance and opportunities; layering the state-funded Workforce Development Training Fund Apprenticeship Grants to provide a state incentive for businesses to create a registered apprenticeship program; coordination for technical assistance for businesses to create or expand registered apprenticeships; coordination for apprentice recruitment, screening, and enrollment; and creation of a grant to offset costs for on-the-job-learning for employers with registered apprenticeship programs.

Specific performance outcome measures include serving 315 total participants over the three-year period of performance with 30 newly created registered apprenticeship programs as a result of the efforts of the program. Additional performance metrics include serving a minimum of 40 participants identified as

unemployed, long-term unemployed, dislocated, or incarcerated before enrollment, 100 who complete an apprenticeship program and receive a degree or other credential, and 126 who complete an apprenticeship education/training program.

## **1. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE**

A training services provider who wants to be added to Wyoming's list of eligible training providers must apply for initial eligibility to DWS. DWS reviews applications for completeness and compliance with Section 122 of the WIOA. DWS then presents recommendations to the WWDC for final approval or denial of the provider's application. If approved by the WWDC, the provider will remain eligible and listed for only one year for a particular program.

### **Purpose**

The Workforce Development System established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes informed customer choice, job-driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement. The quality and selection of providers and programs of training services are vital to achieving these core principles. WIOA requires that each State maintain a list of eligible training providers and their eligible training programs, including relevant performance and cost information. To maximize informed customer choice and serve all significant population groups, this list must be made widely available, including in electronic formats, and presented in a way that is easily understood.

The State of Wyoming's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and related eligibility procedures ensure the accountability, quality, and labor market relevance of programs for training services that receive funds through WIOA Title I, subtitle B. Individuals seeking relevant information regarding training providers and programs can access Wyoming's ETPL through Wyoming's labor exchange system, [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com). This list can serve as an important tool for participants and case managers in identifying training in high-demand industries that result in positive outcomes and recognized credentials.

This policy provides instruction, guidance and establishes criteria and procedures for training organizations wishing to provide training services under WIOA.

### **Responsibilities**

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS), on behalf of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) and the Governor, is responsible for:

- Informed customer choice, performance accountability, and continuous improvement;
- The development, maintenance, and dissemination of the State list of eligible providers and programs;
- Ensuring programs meet the eligibility criteria and performance levels established by the State;
- Verifying the accuracy of the submitted information;
- Ensuring performance and cost information relating to each provider is available to the public;
- Ensuring reporting outcomes on provider programs of study and student success in those programs;
- Finalizing approval for providers and programs approved by the WWDC;
- Reviewing initial and continued training provider applications to ensure that accurate eligibility criteria and performance information has been provided before submission to the WWDC for final approval;
- Recommending the termination of providers due to the provider's submission of inaccurate eligibility and/or performance information;
- Removing programs that do not meet established program criteria or performance levels;
- Ensuring that a sufficient number of providers of training services have expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and that training providers are available to assist adults in need of adult education and literacy activities;

- Making recommendations for approval or denial of providers and programs to the WWDC; and
- Entering and maintaining provider information and WIOA approval status within the labor exchange system, [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com).

### **Identification of Eligible Providers**

Eligible training provider programs may be delivered in-person, online, or in a blended approach. To be eligible to receive WIOA funds for the provision of training services, a provider must be:

- An institution of higher education that provides a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential;
- A provider that reports data of performance for all individuals, which includes both WIOA and non-WIOA students, in the approved program of study for both WIOA and non-WIOA students;
- An entity that carries out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50, *et seq.*); and
- Public or private providers of training services, including community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, and eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities, under WIOA title II if such activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training.

A provider described in either category 1 or 2 above must comply with the criteria, performance information requirements, and procedures established under the WIOA Section 122. This policy is to be included on the list of eligible providers of training services. Providers described in Category 3 above, Registered Apprenticeship programs, are exempt from these requirements and shall be included and maintained on the list of eligible providers for as long as the corresponding program of the provider remains registered as a Registered Apprenticeship program.

### **Training Provider Eligibility**

The requirements to become a WIOA eligible training provider apply to all organizations with the exception of Registered Apprenticeship programs. Eligibility requirements include the following:

1. A training provider must operate in a competitive environment;
2. An established catalog or market price must be established for each offered program;
3. Training programs must be provided within normal business operations or the day-to-day functions of the business;
4. Training programs must have published/stated duration, hours, and schedules;
5. The training provider must be current on Unemployment Insurance payments and Worker's Compensation coverage.
6. The training provider is subject to the Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination requirements found in Section 188 of WIOA, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title-I financially assisted program or activity. WWDC must ensure that a training provider is complying before approving the training provider to be added to the ETPL;
7. The training provider must be on the active ETPL for their home state if located outside of Wyoming; and
8. The training provider must collect performance data by the program of study for WIOA and non-WIOA participants.



## **ETPL Eligibility Requirements**

Any training provider that wishes to be granted approval to receive WIOA funds for serving Wyoming's Adult and Dislocated Worker participants must request an application for eligibility from DWS. The WWDC will grant final approval or denial of all training provider applications.

No WWDC approval is necessary if the training provider is an entity that carries out programs under The Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act" (50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.). Providers meeting this condition must complete and submit the Registered Apprenticeship Information packet to DWS. This packet can be requested from DWS or the State Director of the Wyoming Office of Apprenticeship.

Out-of-state training providers must complete and submit Wyoming ETPL Application C (Attachment C) and all additional required documents to DWS. No out-of-state training providers will be approved that are not listed on the ETPL of their home State.

Training providers, other than those providers that qualify as a Registered Apprenticeship, must complete Wyoming ETPL Application B (Attachment B). The provider must submit Application B with all additional required documents.

With the exception of Registered Apprenticeship programs, training providers submitting applications must provide the following information for each training program seeking approval:

- Demonstrate that programs prepare individuals for in-demand occupations. In the instance a program does not relate to an in-demand occupation, DWS will consider the program if the training provider can demonstrate an employer need for trainees;
- Program completion rates for all individuals enrolled in the specific training program;
- Percentage of all program graduates who have entered unsubsidized employment in an occupation related to the training program conducted;
- Average wage at post-program job placement for all individuals who have completed the training program and entered unsubsidized employment;
- Type of certification, license, or accreditation that students completing the program obtain;
- Program costs, including tuition, fees, books, and tools, if applicable;
- The school's refund policy and grievance procedures;
- If applicable, a current letter of accreditation; and
- If applicable, documentation that the appropriate Professional Licensing Board or other licensing agency reviewed and approved the provider's curriculum and that the appropriate Professional Licensing Board licenses the instructors to practice the occupation or profession that is taught.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for approval.

## **Initial ETPL Eligibility Criteria**

Initial eligibility for all new training providers under WIOA began July 1, 2015. New providers may seek initial eligibility by contacting DWS and requesting an application packet. If approved by the WWDC, the provider will remain eligible and listed on the ETPL for one calendar year for a particular program. After the first year, if the provider/program meets subsequent approval requirements, the WWDC may provide approval for continued eligibility. A provider will then be reviewed every year to remain on the ETPL. The criteria and information requirements established by the WWDC for initial eligibility include:

- A description of each program of training service to be offered, including costs associated with the training program;
- The training program must be for occupations in in-demand industry sectors identified by the state, region, or WWDC. In-demand or priority industry sector information must be verified with the WWDC.

\*Registered Apprenticeship programs are automatically considered “in-demand” occupations;

- The training program must result in the awarding of an industry-recognized credential, national or state certificate, or degree, including all industry appropriate competencies, licensing, and/or certification requirements;
- A description concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with a business; and
- Program-specific performance information as outlined in the ETPL Initial Eligibility Application.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are also not subject to program initial eligibility criteria and approval.

### **Continued ETPL Eligibility Criteria**

All training providers and programs on the ETPL will be evaluated annually by the WWDC and DWS to ensure they continue to meet the eligibility to be retained on the ETPL beyond the period of initial eligibility. To determine continued eligibility, DWS must verify that the training provider meets the requirements outlined in the Initial Eligibility Criteria section. To be approved for continued inclusion on the ETPL, providers and programs must meet the following minimum criteria:

- The training program(s) must be related to an in-demand occupation;
  - Exception: In instances where the training programs do not relate to an in-demand occupation, the training provider must demonstrate an employer's need for trainees by providing a list of job openings or explanations of future job growth;
- If the training provider does not meet the criteria of an Institution of Higher Education as defined by the Higher Education Act, the training program(s) must be available and sold to the general public as evidenced through the provider's website or marketing materials; and
- The training provider must submit to DWS specified performance-based information relating to student outcomes (see reporting section) in each training program offered by the training provider for both WIOA and non-WIOA students.

### **Adding Programs**

A school or provider on the ETPL must seek approval from the WWDC to add a new “program of training services,” defined as “one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen that leads to specified outcomes, including recognized post-secondary credentials, secondary school diplomas or their equivalent, employment, or measurable skill gains toward such credentials or employment.”

- DWS presents recommendations to the WWDC, which then approves or denies the new program for inclusion on the ETPL. Providers submit the same program information as to when submitting a program for initial eligibility.
- New training programs must award some type of associate's degree, baccalaureate degree, or industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license.
- If at the completion of the training program, an industry-recognized certification is required, the training provider must provide the means for the completion of the certification, and if additional costs are involved, they must be included in the initial program costs provided to the DWS.
- Providers located outside of the state of Wyoming must have the proposed new program listed on the ETPL list for their home state before application for Wyoming.
- Distance Learning, E-Learning, or Online Training providers must meet all application requirements, and students must have access to instructors by phone, email, or directly online.
- DWS and the WWDC reserve the right to review an application at any time. A review may include a request for current performance data, good-standing certificates, or other pertinent information.

## **Removing Programs**

The WWDC must approve the removal of a training provider or program from the ETPL. A training provider and/or program(s) can be removed from the ETPL for any of the following:

- A WIOA participant has not enrolled in the training program during the previous two program years (July 1 through June 30);
- The training provider has lost its accreditation;
- The training program has not achieved the minimum performance criteria for continued eligibility; and
- The training provider has not demonstrated a good faith effort in providing data to DWS.

## **Payment**

DWS can make payments to a training provider or school that requires full payment upfront only if the training provider has a prorated refund policy stating they will provide a refund if the customer drops out.

## **Reporting**

The WIOA requires the state to submit an ETP Report with the federal WIOA Annual Performance report. This report includes all WIOA and non-WIOA participants served by each training program, excluding Apprenticeship programs listed on the ETPL. The ETP Report gathers critical information, including the employment, earnings, and credentials obtained by participants in the training program. This information will be widely disseminated to assist participants and members of the general public in identifying effective training providers and programs. All training providers are required to electronically submit the program participant data outlined below.

The state recognizes the reporting burden this requirement causes and understands the data limitations, so the state will work with training providers based on the available data that is provided.

To ease the reporting burden, the State will also conduct employment and wage-matching for training providers that provide a valid social security number for their program participants.

Training providers that demonstrate a good faith effort in providing data will not be subject to removal from the ETPL; however, failure to provide any data may result in removal from the ETPL. Performance data from the ETP Report will be used for subsequent eligibility review of all training programs, excluding DOL Registered Apprenticeships.

The reporting requirements established in 20 CFR 677.230(a) apply to all programs of study on the state ETP list, including programs of study that did not serve any WIOA participants during the reporting period. These performance measures will be included in the list of Eligible Training Provider programs made available to the public. The training provider must provide the following performance information after the first year of Initial Eligibility and annually thereafter, for each program, for all individuals participating:

### **For WIOA Title I Core Program Participants receiving training from an ETP:**

- The total number of participants who received training services through a WIOA Title I core program, separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent year and the three preceding program years;
- The total number of participants who exited from training services, separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent year and the three preceding program years;
- The average cost per participant for participants who received training services, separated by the type of entity that provided the training, during the most recent program year and the three years preceding program years; and,
- The number of participants with barriers to employment served by the WIOA Title I core programs, separated by each subpopulation of such individuals, and by race, ethnicity, sex, and age.

**For All Individuals Receiving Training Provided by an ETP:**

1. The levels of performance achieved for all individuals engaging in the program of study, specifically:
  - i. The percentage of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program;
  - ii. The percentage of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after exit from the program;
  - iii. The median earnings of individuals who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after exit from the program;
  - iv. The percentage of individuals who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; during participation in or within one year after exiting from the program; and
  - v. The total number of individuals exiting from the program of study.
2. For purposes of this agreement, **all individuals participating** will include both WIOA funded students and non-WIOA funded students who were enrolled in the approved training program. Unsubsidized employment refers to employment not supported by state or federal funds.
3. Placement in employment is defined as the participants' employment immediately after completion of training.

**Reporting by Program of Study**

Providers are responsible for reporting these data elements to the state:

- The name of the provider;
- The description of the training provided;
- The address of the provider;
- The type of entity;
- The name;
- Description of the training program;
- The URL of the training program;
- The program of study by the potential outcome;
- The name of the associated credential;
- The program of study's classification of instructional programs (CIP) code;
- Costs-related information for non-WIOA participants;
- Program length;
- Program prerequisites; and
- Program format.

**Reporting on Non-WIOA Program Participants**

WIOA section 116(d)(4) requires that ETPs provide the necessary information to the state on all individuals being served in the approved program of study so that the state may submit the required information for annual reporting purposes.

The reporting elements include:

- The number of individuals served;

- The number exited (includes students who completed, withdrew, or transferred out of the program);
- The number who completed the program;
- The number of exits employed in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- The number of exits employed in the 4th quarter after exit;
- Median earnings of exited participants in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- Number of exits who attained a credential during participation or within one year after exit;
- Average earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit; and
- Average earnings in the 4th quarter after exit.

### **Personally-Identifiable Information and Confidentiality (PII)**

WIOA requires States, Local Areas, and ETPs to report on indicators of performance pertaining to employment outcomes. The need to rely on quarterly wage records to prepare those reports raises complex privacy and confidentiality issues. Under WIOA, eligible training providers may include institutions of higher education, entities that carry out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq., or other public or private providers of a program of training services. For an institution of higher education to be an eligible training provider, it must provide a program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential. Public and private eligible training providers may include community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, or eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA if such activities are provided in combination with certain training services. The federally required evaluations of WIOA-funded training programs require that DWS match wage records to records maintained by training providers that contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) (e.g., Social Security Numbers) on WIOA and non-WIOA program participants.

PII and other sensitive information must be protected. DWS Workforce Centers and training providers must take the steps necessary to ensure the privacy of all PII obtained from participants and/or other individuals in the ITA invoicing process and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure. All PII data must be processed in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of the records/documents and is designed to prevent unauthorized persons from retrieving such records by computer, remote terminal, or any other means.

In response to privacy concerns for the dissemination of the ETPL, the Department of Labor set forth in § 680.500 of the WIOA Final Rules that in developing the information to accompany the ETPL, disclosure of PII from an education record must be carried out in accordance with Federal Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), including the circumstances relating to prior written consent. Therefore, DWS requires all providers that are subject to FERPA to adhere to all of those requirements to maintain ETPL eligibility.

### **Registered Apprenticeships**

Under WIOA title I-B, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors who request to be on the ETPL are automatically included and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies DWS that it no longer wishes to be included on the list.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial procedures as other providers, because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. In accordance with 20 CFR 680.470(e), ETA encourages voluntary reporting of performance information for Registered Apprenticeship programs. As required by 20 CFR 677.230(b), states must include performance information voluntarily submitted by Registered Apprenticeship programs in the ETP report.

- A Registered Apprenticeship program shall be added to the ETPL upon receipt of the Registered Apprenticeship Information Packet (Attachment A) from the Office of Apprenticeship State Director, or by contacting the Department of Workforce Services and completing the information packet, which provides the following information:

- Occupations and descriptions included in the Registered Apprenticeship program;
  - Name and address of the program sponsor;
  - Name and address of the related Technical Instruction provider;
  - The method and length of the instruction;
  - The number of active apprentices; and
  - The original Registered Apprenticeship registration date.

The WWDC will not impose additional requirements on Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The status of all Registered Apprenticeship programs will be verified every two years through a partnership with the Office of Apprenticeship State Director. Any Registered Apprenticeship programs that have been either voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered will be removed from the Wyoming ETPL.

### **Provider and Programs Approval Process**

The WIOA Program Manager will email the appropriate ETPL application packet to a training service provider upon request. The application packet includes:

- A new provider Welcome and Instruction Letter;
- The appropriate ETPL Application;
- The ETPL General Provisions and Provider Agreement Signature Sheet;
- The Wyoming Vendor Management Packet and W-9 form;
- Instructions for registering as a Provider User in [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com); and
- Instructions for entering program information in [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com).

Creating the Provider ETPL File:

- Copies of all correspondence will be placed in the provider hard copy file;
- For out-of-state providers, verification of ETPL approval in their home state will be placed in the hard copy file. Verification can be obtained at [http://www.servicelocator.org/program\\_search.asp](http://www.servicelocator.org/program_search.asp);
- Upon receipt of the completed application, all documents will be scanned and saved to an electronic file, and original documents will be placed and maintained in a hard copy file; and
- The ETPL Cover Sheet will be completed in preparation for presentation to the WWDC Strategic Performance and Finance (the Committee).

Submitting the ETPL Application to the Committee for Review:

- Email the following documents to the WWDC Staff:
  - Completed Cover Sheet;
  - Completed Application;
  - Signed Provider Agreement Signature Sheet; and
  - Any other documents deemed helpful to the approval process, including the Out of State ETPL verification, program overview, cost summary, labor market information, etc.
- Application documents will be forwarded to the Committee;
- The ETPL Application will be presented at the next scheduled Committee meeting and will either be approved or denied; and
- If approved, the Committee Chair will sign the Provider Agreement Signature Sheet.

Following Approval:

- A copy of the signed Provider Agreement Signature Sheet and a personal letter of approval will be sent to the provider;
- Copies of the signed Provider Agreement Signature Sheet will be maintained in both the electronic and hard copy files; and
- [www.wyomingatwork.com](http://www.wyomingatwork.com) will be updated to reflect the approval status of the provider and the WIOA eligibility of each approved program.

For Denied ETPL applications:

- A letter indicating the results of the Committee's decision and the reasons for denial will be sent to the provider; and
- Copies of the letter and any other correspondence will be maintained in both electronic and hard copy files.

If a provider chooses to appeal the Committee's decision, they will be reminded of the appeal process listed in the ETPL General Provisions and previously provided to them with the initial application documents.

### **Appeals Process**

Any training provider who is not satisfied with the decisions made by the WWDC or the Division has the right to appeal. An appeal may be lodged by:

- Submission of a written appeal to the Division's Program Manager who may:
  - Attempt an informal resolution within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written appeal; or
  - Review the written appeal with the WWDC Strategic Performance and Finance Committee, where a final decision will be determined within 45 days of receipt of a written appeal.
- And finally, if a decision is not agreed upon, the training provider may request a formal hearing consisting of the WIOA Program Manager, a representative from the DWS Office of the Director, and a representative from the WWDC Executive Committee, which may include the Chairman, Vice Chairman, or Committee Chair. Said hearing shall be within 45 days of receipt of the written hearing request. This impartial hearing committee's decision will be final.

### **DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM**

An individual shall be eligible to participate in the WIOA Adult Program if they are:

- Age 18 or older;
- Eligible to work in the United States, including a citizen of the United States, a United States national, permanent resident alien, lawfully admitted refugee, parolee, or other individual authorized to work in the United States;
- In compliance with Selective Service System registration (males only); and
- Meets priority of service.

### **Priority of Service**

With respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities under WIOA Sec. 133(b)(a) or (3), priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient for receipt of career services described in paragraph(2)(A)(xii) and training services. The WWDC, on behalf of the Governor, shall direct the One-Stop operator with regard to making determinations related to such priority.

Priority will be provided to adult individuals who are recipients of public assistance, are determined low-income, or are Basic Skills Deficient over other individuals for receipt of individualized career services and training services. Veterans within these groups receive priority over non-veterans. Adult priority will be determined for these targeted groups during the eligibility and enrollment process through interviews with the adult applicants, use of various assessment tools, and verification of earned income and public assistance benefits when applicable.

To determine priority, a low-income individual includes any individual who is receiving public assistance through Wyoming's Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program benefits, is homeless, or has a total family income for a six-month period that does not exceed the higher level of the poverty line or 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level. Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient include those who have English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th-grade level, are unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society, lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education, is enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL)), or has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation). English Language Learners meet the definition for Basic Skills Deficient and will be included in this priority population.

Wyoming's current WIOA Policy ensures adults who are public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient will meet the eligibility requirements for the Adult program. This will be monitored through the MIS system, local WIOA eligibility review committees, and regular program monitoring.

#### **DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS**

WWDC established a policy that allows DWS the flexibility to transfer up to 100% of funds between WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations, consistent with WIOA provisions.

Transferred funds must stay within the original year of allocation and time period and will depend upon each One-Stop's needs. Criteria used to determine the appropriateness of transferring funds include changes in planned services to eligible participants, unexpected layoffs requiring additional funds, changes in the goals for serving eligible participants, changes in labor market conditions, and increased costs of funded training programs.

All transfers of funds must be approved by the WWDC or designee and are subject to the WIOA adult program priority of service requirement and each program's performance requirements.

#### **B. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—**

- 1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.**

This is not applicable to single-area states; Wyoming is a single-area state. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS).

- 2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE**



**CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.**

Wyoming continues to develop new and improved strategies to identify and serve Wyoming's out-of-school youth population. Wyoming recognizes a transition to serving more out-of-school youth is an ongoing process and must take time to develop new and improved partnerships with WIOA programs as well as additional partnering organizations within various communities across the State. The State is committed to incorporating strategies for doing so.

Strategies have and will continue to incorporate strong partnerships with local homeless youth organizations, AE programs, TANF and SNAP staff and/or organization, Job Corps, local businesses, alternative schools, justice-involved youth, disabled and transitioning youth, other youth organizations, and unemployment insurance claimants within the age eligibility that are targeted for out-of-school youth recruitment.

Although focus is shifting to serving the out-of-school population, service presentations, including Labor Market Information, labor exchange education, and youth program outreach, should continue to be provided to schools. Communication with school personnel, including principals, vocational teachers, and counselors, is crucial to locating students who have dropped out or those graduating and in need of assistance for occupational skills training to fill in-demand jobs.

The State's youth program also continues to include effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Working closely with these employers is necessary as the State strives to offer quality work experience opportunities to youth who need work-readiness skills and work-based learning. A minimum of 20% of youth expenditures will be put toward such activities.

Each DWS area has socioeconomic indicators that may require a more customized plan for delivering services such as job training opportunities, leadership skill development, guidance and counseling, adult mentoring, job shadowing, supportive services, tutoring and study skills training, alternative secondary school services, paid and unpaid work experiences, Registered Apprenticeships, post-secondary transition, and employment opportunities. A major goal is to establish partnerships that support the Youth Program and to strengthen these relationships, so they effectively provide WIOA program services now and in the future.

**3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT.**

The State plans to carry out these activities by assisting young people who are disconnected, disengaged, and lack self-sufficiency by engaging them in employment, education, and training that will support them in succeeding in the labor market and transition them into successful adulthood. The 14-Program Elements are available at all One-Stop Centers; however, need for services will be determined through assessments and needs of the youth participant and documented on the Individual Service Strategy.

The 14-Program Elements are:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential;
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- Work Experience – Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; on-the-job training opportunities;

- Institutional/occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved;
- Education is offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors as appropriate;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
- Financial literacy education;
- Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services;
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education; and
- Participants and Workforce Specialists work together to determine which elements are provided, based on the objective assessment and individual service strategy. This process assists participants in obtaining a focus to begin to develop competencies for the world of work and includes identification of skills, needed skills, work readiness, training, and career pathways.

### **Recruiting out-of-school youth**

The biggest change under the WIOA Youth Program is the shift to focus resources primarily on out-of-school youth. Wyoming is committed to incorporating strategies to incorporate strong framework services, such as intake, objective assessments, and development of individual service strategies, case management, supportive services, and follow-up services. Another focus is providing a minimum of 20% of expenditures on work experience opportunities for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who are low-income; have basic literacy skills not commensurate with respective grade level; who are high school dropouts; homeless, runaway, or foster-care children; pregnant or parenting; legal offenders; disabled; or lack vocational goals and reside in geographically remote areas will be the focus of the proposed plan.

The targeted groups are identified using a variety of methods that include the following:

- Coordinated assessment efforts with community partners;
- Partnering with State agencies;
- Alternative learning centers;
- School counselors;
- Probation and parole;
- Youth group homes;
- Residential treatment centers; and

- Other community organizations.

Partners reflect the suggested partner structure outlined in WIOA. These partners are a crucial resource as service providers for at-risk youth, including young people who are at risk for dropping out of high school, those who have already dropped out, or who have completed their high school education.

Staff will either solely or work closely with a partnering organization to use an application process to determine and document an applicant's eligibility for WIOA youth services. New components will consist of incorporating Career Pathways as part of both the initial objective assessment and the individual service strategy. The service strategy will also be directly linked to one or more performance indicators. The process includes an evaluation of the young person's residency, income eligibility, age, basic occupational skills and abilities, aptitudes, interests, barriers to employment, support service needs, academic requirements, financial resources, and vocational potential. Required documentation and verification of eligibility will be maintained in Wyoming at Work management information system, and/or in paper format. The program will also include effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Eligibility criteria – To be eligible for the WIOA youth program, an individual must be an out-of-school or in-school youth.

An in-school youth is an individual who:

- Is attending school;
- Is not younger than 14 nor older than 21;
- Meets the low-income requirement; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - Basic skills deficient;
  - An English Language Learner;
  - An ex-offender;
  - A homeless youth or runaway, in foster care, or has "aged out" of the foster care system;
  - Pregnant or parenting;
  - A youth who is an individual with a disability; or
  - An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes:
    - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy;
    - Youth in a single-parent family;
    - Remoteness;
    - Limited English proficiency;
    - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19–24 years old); and/or
    - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

The criteria for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment refers to Wyoming's State barriers. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understand a waiver exception would be needed to be completed before enrollment.

An Out-of-School Youth is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school;
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at the time of enrollment; and who
- Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - A homeless individual, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster-care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in out-of-home placement;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - An individual with a disability; and/or
  - A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment, which includes:
    - Chronic school absenteeism and truancy,
    - Youth in a single-parent family,
    - Remoteness,
    - Limited English proficiency,
    - Lacks employability skills (only youth 19-24 years old), and
    - Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions.

The criteria for an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment refers to Wyoming's State barriers. These barriers can only be used to find an individual eligible for WIOA if Wyoming has enough Youth enrolled in the program year. The use of State barriers to determine eligibility is based on participant numbers per program year. Therefore, the Wyoming One-Stop staff understand a waiver exception would need to be completed before starting enrollment.

Through a strong partnership with Wyoming's AE centers, youth participants are provided with leadership and guidance to assist with tutoring, study skills training, dropout recovery services, and High School Equivalency completion as an important part of their career pathway to successful employment and post-secondary education.

Follow-up services are a required element for all youth participants and must be provided, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis following case closure. Follow-up services include continued leadership development and adult mentoring, additional career guidance and employment support, and ongoing assistance with education planning and career pathway development.

Assistance with supportive services is made available to all youth participants both during WIOA participation and in follow-up through linkages with community organizations and financial support.

4. **PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND**

**HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.**

Wyoming defines the “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion as meeting one or more State-defined youth barriers. State-defined youth barriers will be used in conjunction with the federally defined barriers when enough Wyoming youth are enrolled in the program to have the availability of this exception.

State-defined youth barriers are as follows:

- **Chronic school absenteeism and truancy:** A youth whose absenteeism or truancy puts them at risk of failing to obtain a high or equivalent;
- **Youth in a single-parent family:** A young person who is a member of a family headed by a single parent or guardian, including parents who have been divorced within the preceding six months, who are in current divorce proceedings, or who are currently legally separated and maintaining separate households;
- **Remoteness:** Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000;
- **Limited English language proficiency:** A youth whose native language is not English and who is unable to communicate effectively in English, resulting in a substantial barrier to employment;
- **Lacks employability skills for older youth, age 19 to 24 only:** An individual who lacks the skills necessary to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. Employability depends on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess, and the manner in which those assets are used; and/or
- **Chronic mental, behavioral, and/or medical health conditions:** A young person with a professionally diagnosed mental, behavioral, or medical health condition lasting three months or more, which generally cannot be prevented by vaccines, nor cured by medication, nor resolved without intervention (for example, parental/youth substance abuse, physical/sexual/psychological abuse, lack of social competence, or suicide proneness).

Wyoming has policies and procedures in place that address “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA Sec. 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment.” This is also addressed during WIOA training sessions.

- Policy on services available to eligible youth who are seeking effective and comprehensive activities to achieve academic and employment success.

These activities may include:

- Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential;
- Preparation for post-secondary education and training opportunities;
- Strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials;
- Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; and
- Effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local and regional labor markets.

WIOA affirms the commitment to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills

training in in-demand industries and occupations such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

An Out-of-School Youth (OSY) is an individual who is:

- Not attending ANY school (as defined under State law);
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment;
- One or more of the following:
  - School Dropout;
  - Within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - Recipient of H.S. Diploma or equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either Basic Skills Deficient or an English language learner;
  - Basic Skills Deficient;
  - A youth, an individual who has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;
  - A youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society;
  - Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
  - Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
  - Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL));
  - Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation; and/or
  - The case manager makes observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note.
- An individual who is an offender;
  - A homeless individual, aged 16 – 24 who meets the criteria defined under section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)), a homeless child or youth aged 16 – 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434A(2)), or a runaway;
  - An individual in foster care or who aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child who is eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - An individual with a disability; or
  - \*An individual who meets the low-income criteria and requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or secure employment (WIOA §§ 3(46) and 129(a)(1)(B)).

An In-School Youth (ISY) is an individual who is:

- Attending (or enrolled in) school (as defined by State law), including secondary and post-secondary school (for purposes of eligibility, WIOA does not consider providers of Adult Education and Job Corps programs to be schools);

- Not younger than 14 or older than 21 at the time of enrollment;
- A low-income individual; and
- One of the following:
  - Basic Skills Deficient;
  - Has English, reading, writing or computing skills at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;
  - a youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society;
  - Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
  - Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
  - Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL));
  - Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation;
  - The case manager makes observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note;
  - An English language learner;
  - An Offender;
  - A homeless individual, aged 14 – 21 who meets the criteria defined under section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C.11434(a)(2)), a homeless child or youth aged 14 – 21 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434A(2)), or a runaway;
  - An individual in foster care, or who aged out of the foster care system, or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child who is eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - An individual with a disability; or
  - \*An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure employment (WIOA § 129(a)(1)C).

\*The State of Wyoming has defined An Individual Who Requires Additional Assistance to Enter or Complete an Educational Program or Secure Employment as one or more of the following:

- **Chronic School Absenteeism and Truancy:** A youth whose absenteeism or truancy puts them at risk of failing to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- **Youth in a Single Parent Family:** A youth who is a member of a family headed by a single parent or guardian, including parents that have been divorced within the last six months or are in a current divorce proceeding or are currently legally separated and maintaining separate households;
- **Remoteness:** Any resident of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or less which is not within 10 miles of another city or town with a population greater than 5,000;
- **Limited English Language Proficiency:** A youth whose native language is not English who is unable to effectively communicate in English, resulting in a substantial barrier to employment;

- **Lacks Employability Skills (Older Youth only, 19–24 years):** An individual who lacks the skills necessary to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. Employability depends on the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess, and the manner in which those assets are implemented; and
- **Chronic Mental, Behavioral, and/or Medical Health Condition:** A youth with professionally diagnosed mental, behavioral, or medical health condition lasting three months or more which generally cannot be prevented by vaccines, nor cured by medication, nor resolved without intervention (e.g. parental/youth substance abuse, physical/sexual/psychological abuse, lack of social competence, suicide proneness).

**1. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL,” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.**

State law does not specifically define the terms “not attending school” or “attending school” (See W.S. § 21-4-102).

**If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Sec. 3(5)(B), include the State definition which must further define how to determine if an individual is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. If not using the portion of the definition contained in WIOA Sec. 3(5)(B), One-Stop staff are to indicate that is the case.**

Wyoming’s definition of “Basic Skills Deficient” is an individual who is:

- A Youth that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test (TABE 11/12 Scores);
- A Youth or Adult that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society;
- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education;
- Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE 11/12 Scores);
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL)); or
- Has poor English language skills and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn’t enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation).

**2. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL’S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.**

**Basic Skills Deficient** – An individual who is:

- A Youth that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;
- A Youth or Adult that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society;
- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or WIOA Title I Policy Approved by the WWDC November 2018 17-2;



- Scores 8.9 or below on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program (including enrolled for English as a Second Language (ESL));
- Has poor English language skills (and would be appropriate for ESL even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA entry into participation); or
- The case manager makes observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note.

### C. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

- 1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).) THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)**
- 2. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)**

Comments from the public comment period may be found on the Wyoming Workforce Development Council's website once the public comment period closes.

The State of Wyoming is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is the provider of WIOA Title I Youth activities. The One-Stop Centers provide the 14 WIOA Youth Elements and offer these activities statewide through 20 of the One-Stop Centers. The Wyoming Department of the Workforce Services has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council.

### 3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

See Appendix 4 – Wyoming's Partner MOU

Business Services		
Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and assistance related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches
Conduct outreach regarding the local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, or incumbent worker contracts
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment, and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Organize and conduct job fairs	Develop training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of One-Stop Center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resource issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities

<b>Business Services</b>		
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry sector partnerships

<b>Job Seeker Services</b>		
Basic Career Services	Individualized Career Services	Training
Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools, and resources available through the State's workforce system	Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs	Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition (ELA), may be provided in combination with the training services described above
In and out of area job search and placement assistance (including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and nontraditional employment)	Referral to training services	OJT
Access to employment opportunities and labor market information	Group counseling	Incumbent Worker Training
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services	Literacy activities related to work readiness	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education
Information on the performance of the State workforce system	Individual counseling and career planning	Training programs operated by the private sector
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Case management for customers seeking training services; individuals in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance	Skill upgrading and retraining
Information and meaningful assistance on Unemployment Insurance claim filing	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships	Entrepreneurial training
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner Agencies and Partners services, programs, and referrals	Workforce preparation services (development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training	Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and	Post-employment follow-up services and support (This is not an	Other training services as determined by the workforce

<b>Job Seeker Services</b>		
Basic Career Services	Individualized Career Services	Training
education programs not provided under WIOA	individualized career service, but listed here for completeness)	Partner Agencies and Partners' governing rules

<b>Youth Services</b>	
Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to the completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential	Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate to include Adult Education services.
Paid and unpaid work experience that has as a component of academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities	Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved
Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
Supportive services	Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
Financial literacy education	Entrepreneurial skills training
Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training

#### **4. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council uses the process afforded in 2 C.F.R. § 200 and 2 C.F.R. § 2900 to apply W.S. § 9-2-1016 to the procurement process.

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services and Training funding are provided by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council's (WWDC) fiscal agent, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is the provider of WIOA Title I Youth activities. The Wyoming One-Stop Centers provide all 14 WIOA Youth Elements and offer these activities statewide through the 20 One-Stop Centers. Wyoming Workforce Development Council through its fiscal agent, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the core and required WIOA programs that exist in Wyoming.

**5. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.**

**Training services**

Wyoming has not established a sequence of service requirements for career services and training. One-Stop Center staff may determine what training is appropriate regardless of whether the individual has received basic or individualized career services first. Training services may be provided if the staff determines, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the selected program of training services.

Training services, when determined appropriate, are provided through an individual training account or via a training contract. Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographical area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. The selection of training services is conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, is informed by the performance of relevant training providers, and is coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance (WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)). This is accomplished through development of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which requires that all providers of training services for adult and dislocated worker participants meet specific criteria designed to increase accountability and transparency through reporting and biennial review. WIOA requires that the WWDC, on behalf of the Governor, establish criteria and procedures regarding the eligibility of these training providers. The State's ETPL is a comprehensive list of various post-secondary institutions and public and private training programs that is made available to the public through the virtual One-Stop management information system, Wyoming at Work, and includes occupational and performance information.

Individual training accounts are the primary method used for procuring training services. However, in certain circumstances, a contract for training services may be developed instead of an individual training account as explained under WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii) of WIOA; the full list of exceptions is provided below and include the following:

- If the individual is enrolled in on-the-job training, which may include placing participants in a Registered Apprenticeship program, customized training, incumbent training, or transitional jobs;
- If the board determines that an insufficient number of eligible providers of training services are enrolled to use individual training accounts;
- If a training service program of demonstrated effectiveness is offered in a local area by a community-based organization or other private organization;
- If the board determines that the most appropriate training could be provided by an institution of higher education to train multiple individuals for jobs in in-demand sectors or occupations; and
- If the board determines a pay-for-performance contract is the most effective means of providing training services.

**Work-based training Registered Apprenticeship is an important component of employment and training services that can be provided to customers. Apprenticeships are most often used as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. As Registered Apprenticeship programs, they automatically qualify to be placed on the State Eligible Training Provider List, allowing individual training accounts to support participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs and more directly connect those programs to One-Stop Centers.**

Some examples of typical Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are:

- Employers who provide related instruction;
- Employers who use an outside educational provider;
- Joint apprenticeship training programs; and
- Intermediaries.

Additional details of the Registered Apprenticeship Program are provided later in this plan.

### **On-the-job training**

On-the-job training continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers. Wyoming provides up to 50% of the wage rate of the participant to employers for training costs while the participant is in the program. On-the-job-training expectations are that the worker will be retained by the employer upon training completion.

### **Incumbent worker training**

Incumbent worker training is a new option under WIOA, and Wyoming has not yet decided how best to implement this new opportunity.

### **Transitional jobs**

Transitional jobs are time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100%. These jobs can be in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or who have an inconsistent work history, and in combination with comprehensive career and supportive services.

The Wyoming One-Stop Centers will be tasked with using Transitional Jobs with targeted groups, including the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and with individuals with disabilities.

## **6. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.**

The State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions to coordinate Title I activities with those activities under Title II, is revising the approach of local involvement to meet the needs of a diversifying economy. The transition to Next Generation Sector Partnerships will begin with professional development training to interested communities. The training begins with the needs of business rather than the menu of services available from the public sector.

DWS and AE will continue to integrate wrap-around services that include access to basic literacy, post-secondary education, career and technical training, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and employment opportunities.

The following procedure is used for granting funds to eligible providers. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is developed and aligned with requirements provided in the guidance from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career Technical and Adult Education. The thirteen considerations for awarding grants are explained in the general information section of the application packet. Applicants are required to address each of the considerations in their response to the RFP. Scoring of applications considers these responses.

Applicants must describe in their responses any cooperative or collaborative arrangements, provision of services, how they will meet performance, one-stop partner responsibilities, how equitable access will be achieved, and how they will meet the needs of eligible individuals.

Specific goals are identified from the Governor's Vision, and applicants must describe how they will align their activities to meet these goals. The RFP also includes a description of how funds are awarded.

All proposals are received by the WCCC office. Each proposal will be reviewed by two teams of independent reviewers using a standardized process described in the Resource and Policy section of the application packet. The State Board, in fulfilling the Local Board function of reviewing applications, forms an Alignment Team subcommittee. This team reviews for alignment of the application to the Wyoming Unified State Plan, the Governor's Vision, Mission and Goals, and statewide economic and educational initiatives. The team then makes recommendations for improvement or changes and sends these back to the state AE office for consideration in awarding funds.

A separate Compliance Team reviews the application for compliance to the state's RFP and WIOA requirements, completeness, and inclusion of all requested forms and budgets. This team will score and rank the applications.

The state AE office checks for signatures and Dun & Bradstreet ID Number (DUNS), applies the funding formula, and determines awards. Recommendations from the Alignment Team must be addressed and revisions made within two weeks of award notice. The federally-required match of 25% will be made up of state funds and in-kind match resources.

**7. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

Cooperative Agreements are attached as Appendix 6

**E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)**

**Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:**

The ETP waiver request to waive the requirement of collecting and reporting performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List.

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

The State of Wyoming requests the consideration of a waiver from the requirements in WIOA, Sections 116 (related to performance) and 122 (related to the Eligible Training Provider List). As a whole, these regulations constitute a burdensome requirement for the collection and reporting of performance outcomes for all students above and beyond WIOA students participating in training programs listed on Wyoming's Eligible Training Provider List.

**Research**

The Research & Planning Unit (R&P Unit) of DWS conducted a study and published a white paper on the feasibility of creating Eligible Training Provider (ETP) performance reports. According to WIOA, all eligible training providers must report data for WIOA-funded and non-WIOA-funded training program participants. During the study period, 169 approved ETP programs were active during the study period, but only 47 reported both participant and non-participant data to the DWS. College and university data were used by matching the training provider and CIP code to fill in some missing parts of the non-participant data. An example of this is Casper College's Fire Science/Firefighting program. The report only includes participant outcomes data on 50 programs as most program-specific results were non-disclosable because of the confidentiality requirements in 20 C.F.R § 603. The report emphasized the need to collect more non-participant data to provide a clearer picture of employment and wage outcomes for training programs. The report was shared with DWS staff, the Wyoming community colleges, the Community College Commission,

and the University of Wyoming. The complete study can be accessed [here](#).

### **Number of Programs Currently on ETPL**

There were 62 providers and 525 programs in Program Year 2020. Ninety-two participants were served through these training providers.

### **How many Programs will be removed?**

It is difficult to determine how many programs would be removed as we don't have a count of providers that were ready and willing to provide the data. One hundred sixty-five programs had 0 participants. If providers refuse to or cannot report on programs with 0 participants, we would remove 165 programs from the list. For instance, the Wyoming community colleges have thus far been unable or declined to provide the requested data in the required format. The 7 community colleges constitute 290 of the 525 programs. If they cannot provide the data, Wyoming will lose 290 programs that served 52 participants in Program Year 2020.

### **Narrative**

- The State of Wyoming is small, with minimal approved training providers. The requirements for a provider are now more intensive, and many providers do not have the staffing levels nor the bandwidth to meet the requirements. The pandemic exacerbated this problem for many approved training providers, as budget cuts stretched resources even further.
- The burden on training providers to collect and provide information on all students once they leave or graduate from the program results in certain providers electing not to be on the ETPL, which limits consumer choice.

The current ETPL requirements are for Wyoming to report performance data on All students in any of the ETPL approved programs. However, the WIOA-paid students enrolled with most training providers represent a small portion of their enrollment. Considerations are:

- Non-WIOA paid students are more likely to be planning to enter training-related employment after an entire suite of courses over a more extended period. Therefore including these (non-WIOA) students in the cohort that counts toward that course's performance unfairly skews the outcome in a negative direction.
- Providing information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps make informed decisions about how to use their ITAs is challenged by the inclusion of non WIOA students in performance calculation.
- Proprietary schools would have to collect sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students for the state to match student wage and earnings information utilizing ETPL programs, which may leave students open to identity theft and privacy considerations, etc.
- Much of the performance information is self-reported through surveys, etc., making it difficult to get accurate performance data since students may not respond to surveys. As a result, schools may just provide performance information previously collected without resurveying students.

### **Waiver Goals**

- Remove the most significant disincentive for schools and training providers to participate in the ETPL in anticipation of maximizing the availability of more training options.
- To provide more numerous and varied training offerings for individuals utilizing ITAs via DWS (in other words, more consumer choice).
- More training providers can lead to lower-cost options
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training via ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and DWS.

### **Plan Moving Forward**

- Once hired, the Title I(B) Program Manager will communicate with all ETP's to make the reporting

requirement more clear, explain the reasoning behind reporting the data and help them understand from where the requirement to provide the data comes. Working in collaboration with the ETP's, the Title 1(B) Program Manager will work to bridge any gaps of understanding of what is required, why it is required, and how the ETP's can help DWS meet its reporting obligations. DWS will work to overcome the current barriers to meeting this obligation and will begin collecting the data once cooperation is obtained from the ETP's.

## **Background**

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) federal requirements are creating a hardship for many training providers, including the technical colleges, which results in decreased numbers of providers adding their programs to the ETPL. Many training providers do not have existing staff to perform the data-gathering processes required to submit program information and performance data and cannot justify hiring additional staff. The regulations and related performance measures requiring providers to include an "all students" cohort also interfere with FERPA laws. Providers do not currently have students' complete releases for data-gathering purposes. Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has one staff member providing technical assistance to training providers in an effort to reduce hardships relating to collecting provider and program data; however, these issues are leading to Wyoming having fewer training providers on the list.

Because of Wyoming's size, population, and demographics, training resources available to individuals are already limited. The administrative burden of the regulations and performance measures will decrease the number of providers and programs on Wyoming's eligible training providers' list and negatively impact consumer choice in an area with current limited options.

This waiver request will assist Wyoming to further develop its workforce while continuing to focus on innovative strategies for a demand-driven workforce.

## **(2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

Currently, no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers would prevent implementation of the requested waiver. The State of Wyoming regulations and policy statements comply with the current federal law.

## **Research**

The Research & Planning Unit (R&P Unit) of DWS conducted a study and published a white paper on the feasibility of creating Eligible Training Provider (ETP) performance reports. According to WIOA, all eligible training providers must report data for WIOA-funded and non-WIOA-funded training program participants. During the study period, 169 approved ETP programs were active during the study period, but only 47 reported both participant and non-participant data to the DWS. College and university data were used by matching the training provider and CIP code to fill in some missing parts of the non-participant data. An example of this is Casper College's Fire Science/Firefighting program. The report only includes participant outcomes data on 50 programs as most program-specific results were non-disclosable because of the confidentiality requirements in 20 C.F.R § 603. The report emphasized the need to collect more non-participant data to provide a clearer picture of employment and wage outcomes for training programs. The report was shared with DWS staff, the Wyoming community colleges, the Community College Commission, and the University of Wyoming. The complete study can be accessed [here](#).

## **Number of Programs Currently on ETPL**

There were 62 providers and 525 programs in Program Year 2020. Ninety-two participants were served through these training providers.

## **How many Programs will be removed?**

It is difficult to determine how many programs would be removed as we don't have a count of providers that



were ready and willing to provide the data. One hundred sixty-five programs had 0 participants. If providers refuse to or cannot report on programs with 0 participants, we would remove 165 programs from the list. For instance, the Wyoming community colleges have thus far been unable or declined to provide the requested data in the required format. The 7 community colleges constitute 290 of the 525 programs. If they cannot provide the data, Wyoming will lose 290 programs that served 52 participants in Program Year 2020.

### **Narrative**

- The State of Wyoming is small, with minimal approved training providers. The requirements for a provider are now more intensive, and many providers do not have the staffing levels nor the bandwidth to meet the requirements. The pandemic exacerbated this problem for many approved training providers, as budget cuts stretched resources even further.
- The burden on training providers to collect and provide information on all students once they leave or graduate from the program results in certain providers electing not to be on the ETPL, which limits consumer choice.

The current ETPL requirements are for Wyoming to report performance data on All students in any of the ETPL approved programs. However, the WIOA-paid students enrolled with most training providers represent a small portion of their enrollment. Considerations are:

- Non-WIOA paid students are more likely to be planning to enter training-related employment after an entire suite of courses over a more extended period. Therefore including these (non-WIOA) students in the cohort that counts toward that course's performance unfairly skews the outcome in a negative direction.
- Providing information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps make informed decisions about how to use their ITAs is challenged by the inclusion of non WIOA students in performance calculation.
- Proprietary schools would have to collect sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students for the state to match student wage and earnings information utilizing ETPL programs, which may leave students open to identity theft and privacy considerations, etc.
- Much of the performance information is self-reported through surveys, etc., making it difficult to get accurate performance data since students may not respond to surveys. As a result, schools may just provide performance information previously collected without resurveying students.

### **Waiver Goals**

- Remove the most significant disincentive for schools and training providers to participate in the ETPL in anticipation of maximizing the availability of more training options.
- To provide more numerous and varied training offerings for individuals utilizing ITAs via DWS (in other words, more consumer choice).
- More training providers can lead to lower-cost options
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training via ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and DWS.

### **Plan Moving Forward**

Once hired, the Title I(B) Program Manager will communicate with all ETP's to make the reporting requirement more clear, explain the reasoning behind reporting the data and help them understand from where the requirement to provide the data comes. Working in collaboration with the ETP's, the Title 1(B) Program Manager will work to bridge any gaps of understanding of what is required, why it is required, and how the ETP's can help DWS meet its reporting obligations. DWS will work to overcome the current barriers to meeting this obligation and will begin collecting the data once cooperation is obtained from the ETP's.

The State is working to leverage existing systems to assist with meeting the WIOA ETP performance reporting requirements. Despite these efforts, Wyoming has faced several challenges while working to implement the WIOA ETP requirements, which include:

- Ensuring that local areas have sufficient members of, and diversity of, training providers necessary to create an effective marketplace of training programs for WIOA participants using Individual Training Agreements;
- Ensuring fairness in the process of determining training provider eligibility;
- Reducing the burden on training providers to submit performance information to the State that may not be readily accessible to the provider;
- Eligible Training Providers must collect and transmit sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students to match employment and earnings information, which may leave students open to identity theft, and privacy considerations; and
- Significant numbers of proprietary schools are effective training providers but do not have the resources to develop follow-up research, surveys, or other outcome validation with students.

**(3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Waive the requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

- More numerous and varied training offerings for individuals using ITAs;
- More training providers may lead to lower cost and more robust demand-driven training options;
- Stronger partnerships and relationships between providers and the One-Stop System; and
- Greater use of the ETPL by individuals pursuing training in Wyoming related to jobs that are in demand by employers now and in the future.

**Research**

The Research & Planning Unit (R&P Unit) of DWS conducted a study and published a white paper on the feasibility of creating Eligible Training Provider (ETP) performance reports. According to WIOA, all eligible training providers must report data for WIOA-funded and non-WIOA-funded training program participants. During the study period, 169 approved ETP programs were active during the study period, but only 47 reported both participant and non-participant data to the DWS. College and university data were used by matching the training provider and CIP code to fill in some missing parts of the non-participant data. An example of this is Casper College’s Fire Science/Firefighting program. The report only includes participant outcomes data on 50 programs as most program-specific results were non-disclosable because of the confidentiality requirements in 20 C.F.R § 603. The report emphasized the need to collect more non-participant data to provide a clearer picture of employment and wage outcomes for training programs. The report was shared with DWS staff, the Wyoming community colleges, the Community College Commission, and the University of Wyoming. The complete study can be accessed [here](#).

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## **Narrative**

- The State of Wyoming is small, with minimal approved training providers. The requirements for a provider are now more intensive, and many providers do not have the staffing levels nor the bandwidth to meet the requirements. The pandemic exacerbated this problem for many approved training providers, as budget cuts stretched resources even further.
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## **Waiver Goals**

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### **(4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:**

- **Supporting employer engagement;**
- **Connecting education and training strategies;**
- **Supporting work-based learning;**
- **Improving job and career results, and**
- **Other guidance issued by the Department.**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) federal requirements create a hardship for many training providers, including technical colleges, resulting in decreased numbers of providers adding programs to the ETPL. Many training providers do not have existing staff to perform the data-gathering processes required to submit program information and performance data and cannot justify hiring additional staff. The regulations and related performance measures requiring providers to include an “all students” cohort also interfere with FERPA laws. Providers do not currently have students’ complete releases for data gathering purposes. Wyoming Department of Workforce Services has one staff member providing technical assistance to training providers in an effort to reduce hardships related to collecting provider and program data; however, these issues lead to Wyoming having fewer training providers on the list.

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#### **(5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023. Job seekers, individuals who access training services in Wyoming via ITAs, One-Stop staff, and training providers, especially training providers' staff, will benefit from this waiver.

#### **(6) Describes the processes used to:**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

Annual WIOA reviews include an evaluation of how waivers impact local programs to ensure that programmatic goals and outcomes are met. Wyoming will collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

#### **Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**

Annual WIOA reviews will include an evaluation of how waivers impact local programs to ensure that programmatic goals and outcomes are met. Wyoming will collect and report information about waiver

outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

**Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

Wyoming is a single area state. The individuals who are involved with the ETP performance requirement were involved in the development and finalization of this waiver request.

**Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**

As a single area state, Wyoming's only Workforce Investment Board, the Workforce Development Council, has been briefed regarding this waiver request.

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

As a single area state, Wyoming's only Workforce Investment Board, the Workforce Development Council, has been briefed in regards to this waiver request.

**Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

Due to the fact that this waiver is included in the State Plan, it will be available to the public during the State Plan public comment period.

**(7) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.**

**WIOA Waiver Request** – Requirement to collect and report performance data on all students in programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List for Program Years 2020 to 2023.

As a single area state, Wyoming is able to monitor programmatic goals and outcomes quarterly. If granted this waiver, Wyoming will monitor how the waiver is impacting each American Job Center when we hold on-site programmatic reviews, once every three years.

**(8) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.**

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is willing to provide any additional data for all waiver requests.

**TITLE I-B ASSURANCES**

<b>The State Plan must include:</b>	<b>Include</b>
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and Basic Skills Deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes

#### ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.6		75.6	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.1		72.1	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$6,608		\$6,608	
Credential Attainment Rate	62.0		62.0	
Measurable Skill Gains	78.7		78.7	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

#### DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	82.1		82.1	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	79.1		79.1	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$8,640		\$8,640	
Credential Attainment Rate	59.0		59.0	
Measurable Skill Gains	80		80.0	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

#### YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	67		67.0	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	58.4		58.4	

Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,032		\$3,032	
Credential Attainment Rate	52.0		52.0	
Measurable Skill Gains	72.3		72.3	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

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## **PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)**

### **A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF**

#### **1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.**

Career Services authorized by WIOA categorizes services into three delivery strategies: Basic Career Services; Individualized Career Services; and Follow-up Services. The primary services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff are Basic Career Services. The State of Wyoming intends to continue using state merit staff and will explore using other staff for Wagner-Peyser. All Basic Career Services must be available and will be coordinated with One-Stop center partners. Individualized Career Services may be made available by Wagner-Peyser staff per TEGL (Training and Employment Guidance Letter) 3-15. Career Services can be delivered in any order to assist clients to obtain and retain employment.

As stated above, the primary Wagner-Peyser services are Basic Career Services, which may include some of the following:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services to include:
  - Job search assistance, including placement assistance,
  - Provision of information related to in-demand occupations, career counseling and recruitment; and
- Services to employers;
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services such as SNAP, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), WIOA, etc.;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information related to eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- Assistance completing financial aid documents for education and training programs;
- Provision of information related to nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Wage survey analysis on occupations;
- Job vacancy listings for local labor market areas; and
- Information for Unemployment Insurance including meaningful assistance with a direct expedited link to Unemployment Insurance staff.

#### **2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS**



Program managers receive training specific to the programs they administer. The training is provided through seminars, phone conferences, and other means by U.S. Department of Labor personnel and other workforce experts. Managers, in turn, train AJC personnel and others regarding these same programs to ensure continuity of operations and service. Regular phone and/or video conferences occur for JVSG staff, Workforce Specialists, Business Representatives, Wyoming at Work Focus Group team, and other programs.

WIOA 101 Case Management training is offered monthly through case management conference calls and manager meetings. Policy and procedure updates are provided as needed through Google Hangouts and online training. In-person training will be offered quarterly at central locations, which includes Wyoming at Work System training. The location for this training rotates to make it easier for Workforce Specialists to attend. AJC managers are also required to attend.

DWS continues to conduct Bridges Out of Poverty training—a one-time, day-long session offered as part of case management training, open to current staff and community partners that include hospital personnel, local non-profit staff, other State agency personnel, and business people. Based on the work of Dr. Ruby Payne, Bridges Out of Poverty reaches out to the millions of service providers and businesses whose daily work connects them with people in poverty. Professional development resources are available for AJC staff members through many avenues such as Case Management, WIOA 201, and Business Representative and Rapid Response training. Wyoming has developed Case Note Training and a New Employee Training offering through the WyoTraining system. The State of Wyoming “Performance Management Instrument” process includes individual performance goals for staff members that are used for professional development opportunities. These are available in the form of self-paced training modules, workshops, conferences, as well as classroom environment training to improve customer service techniques.

Wyoming at Work, the Employment and Training Division’s management information system, provides a variety of self-paced training modules. The State Department of Administration and Information conducts training classes in customer support, management, and other service-related areas. On-the-job training is provided through activities that include job shadowing, self-directed study; standard operating procedure manuals; job aids; policy and procedure manuals; and workflow checklists. All are methods of ensuring that staff members are trained to provide the highest quality services to their customers.

### **3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION**

The majority of outreach workers in DWS are merit system employees from Wyoming’s local America Job Centers. However, the new guidance for Wagner-Peyser staffing flexibility will provide Wyoming with the ability to offer seamless service delivery. Wagner-Peyser funds are used to provide AJC clients across Wyoming with labor exchange services and the equipment/materials needed for facilitating both UI claimants and job seekers alike. This also includes mailing, faxing, and emailing of information to and from UI for clients. As required by the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Wagner-Peyser and UI programs are brought together through the provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants. This includes access to Wyoming at Work. Each claimant must apply to two or more jobs per week, and One-Stop Centers not only have trained staff available for assistance but also offer resource computers that claimants can use to search and apply for work; phones/fax for work-related purposes; printers/copiers for resumes and applications, and work areas. The AJC employees have regular contact with the UI system, including the benefits program and employer taxation. Staff work directly with clients and facilitate interaction with UI, sending client correspondence, ensuring forms are filled out correctly, calling to verify needs from UI and adjudicators in regards to client cases, interpreting and conveying requirements and actions that UI documents entail, identifying UI eligibility issues and discussing these with the client, and pairing with UI/adjudication if further details are needed. Staff in all offices have received training regarding the UI process and identification of eligibility issues in multiple formats, including client guidebooks, email, video, peer tutoring, telephone, new hire training, and in-person (when available).

The UI claims center created a video – *Unemployment Insurance 101*. *UI 101* has been distributed to all of the AJCs. DWS is exploring implementation of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program that requires the UI Claims Center and the AJCs to create improved and innovative communication to maximize reemployment efforts.

Continuous collaboration, orientation, and information sharing occur between the Wagner-Peyser program and all divisions, particularly the Employment and Training One-Stop System, which works consistently with DVR to provide disability services; the Workers' Compensation Division; the Labor Standards Division, which handles discrimination and wage complaints; the Wyoming Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) Division; the Department of Family Services, which provides individual and family services to income-eligible clients; and other organizations.

**EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE**

UI claimants are instructed to contact their local AJC upon filing a claim. The AJCs are notified of new claimants in their area to contact to extend service delivery. The *Unemployment Insurance 101* education courses were designed to help AJC staff assist claimants with questions and filing claims.

Intake (including identification through the State's worker profiling and reemployment services system of claimants likely to exhaust benefits) and orientation to information and services available through the One-Stop Delivery System include:

- Initial assessment of skill levels that include literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including:
- Job search and placement assistance and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, which includes:
  - information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(23));
  - Information on nontraditional employment (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(37));
  - Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the One-Stop Delivery System and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
  - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed, and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
  - Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
  - Information about local area performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop Delivery System;
  - Information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit;
  - Housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development (HUD);

- Assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

Meaningful assistance for UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim is provided by the centralized Unemployment Benefits Call Center through a direct linkage phone or electronically. If One-Stop Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for a person to obtain or retain employment, the following services are available:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers. This includes diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
- In-depth interviewing, evaluations to identify employment barriers, and setting employment goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services so the participant can achieve their employment goals. Services also include:
  1. The list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
  2. Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
  3. Career planning (for example, case management);
  4. Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct. Such services prepare clients for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services;
  5. Internships and work experiences linked to careers;
  6. Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire basic academic skills, critical-thinking skills, digital-literacy skills, and self-management skills. These skills include competencies in using resources, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining the skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education, training, or employment;
  7. Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
  8. Integrated education and training programs; and
  9. Follow-up services are provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

**A. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS**

The Wagner-Peyser Program offers basic career services to individuals. The services are available in person and electronically through the Wyoming at Work System. In-person services include assistance with job registration through the Wyoming at Work System, resume preparation, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. Priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses is enforced through federal and state policies and is provided at all centers.

Staff-assisted services, including WIOA career and training services, are also offered at the AJCs. These

services are coordinated with other programs, both within and outside of the AJCs.

Through the centers, workers also have access to the full array of other services that DWS provides, including access to the UI system.

Currently, UI claimants registered in Wyoming at Work are provided with applicable job postings as they become available. DWS is continuously looking for ways to improve the assessment and identification of barriers to employment for proper referral to other and/or additional resources, both internally and externally.

All AJCs throughout Wyoming offer basic, career, and training services for the State's adult, dislocated worker, and youth workforces. This includes veterans, public assistance recipients, people with disabilities, older workers, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, unemployed workers, and underemployed workers. Services are provided through the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, Dads Making A Difference, Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER), WY Quality Counts, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Monitor Advocate, Foreign Labor Certification, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Employment & Training Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. Each program serves unique segments of the State's population, with the overarching goal of helping eligible individuals and families address employment and training needs, so they can achieve long-term self-sufficiency and increase earnings. Many of these programs are coordinated with other organizations, both within the AJCs and the communities served.

Two important Employment and Training Division components are the AJC staff and Wyoming at Work. The Wyoming at Work System facilitates common data collection for the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Investment Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, and other employment and training programs. Reporting of Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act data and performance outcomes, including veteran's data and outcomes, is accomplished through the federal data reporting and validation system.

The Employment and Training Division uses updated versions of Wyoming at Work. The system is updated continually with new federal requirements, as well as features requested by Wyoming staff and administration. The Employment and Training Division has developed a user group for the system, which is facilitated by a staff member from the administrative team. This group, made up of 18 employees from local AJCs, meets monthly via telephone to discuss Wyoming at Work issues and share information on best practices.

When necessary, the group includes representatives from Geographic Solutions, Inc., the designer and operator of the Wyoming at Work System. This team is crucial to the success of the system.

Wagner-Peyser policy guides required services, service delivery, and strategies for services to individual job seekers and businesses. Through the Wagner-Peyser Program, AJC staff use all available resources to streamline employer services and to refer eligible participants to job openings. Business service representatives in each AJC focus on employer needs. Business service representatives conduct initial and follow-up outreach to local companies. Monthly calls are conducted that include topics such as technical assistance, coordinating activities, and sharing best practices.

**B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

Currently, UI claimants who are registered in the State job bank (Wyoming at Work) receive notification of appropriate job postings as they become available. DWS created a brief intake assessment that includes identification of barriers to employment at all levels within the Department to ensure proper referrals are made internally.

All AJCs throughout Wyoming offer basic, career, and training services for Wyoming's adult, dislocated worker and youth individuals. Service provision includes veterans, public assistance recipients, people with disabilities, older workers, MSFWs, UI claimants, unemployed workers, and underemployed workers. This is

accomplished through the Wagner-Peyser Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Employment & Training for Self Sufficiency, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, Dads Making A Difference, Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER), WY Quality Counts, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Monitor Advocate, Foreign Labor Certification, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance programs.

Each DWS program serves unique segments of the state’s population, with the overarching goal of helping eligible individuals and families address employment and training needs, so they can achieve long-term self-sufficiency and increase earnings. Many of these programs are coordinated with other organizations, both within the AJCs and the communities they serve.

The registration process of UI claimants proceeds as follows:

- 1) An individual is separated from work through no fault of their own (various criteria come into play regarding if a client is eligible for UI, but the general standard of “through no fault of their own” applies to most);
- 2) The individual then enters an AJC to gain direct linkage access to UI, a call center in Casper, Wyoming. The individual may also use the internet to file a claim or call directly to open a claim with UI, which makes access to UI easier for clients;
- 3) Once a claim is opened, the individual is alerted repeatedly by mail, electronically, by telephone, and in person to register in Wyoming at Work;
- 4) Claimants must develop at least one active resume. AJC staff assist individuals with any level of registration requested, including resume review and creation, how to use the labor exchange software to search for work, entering saved searches (Virtual Recruiters), and AJC staff conduct a verification call the following day to ensure claimants are alerted to the requirement of registering for work. Currently, claimants who are registered in Wyoming at Work are forwarded applicable job postings as they become available;
- 5) AJCs, in conjunction with the UI claims center, follow up with UI claimants to provide service delivery and labor exchange services.

In accordance with Chapter 27 and UIC Rules 20, 24, and 25 (if necessary), UI claimants are given two weeks to register with the Wyoming at Work System or to follow the registration rules in the state in which they reside. If Wyoming at Work registration is not completed correctly within two weeks, benefits are denied until the issue is resolved.

Claimants are asked a series of qualifying questions regarding their availability for and ability to work. Responses are used for the claim but are also opportunities to gauge a claimant’s suitability for programs such as vocational rehabilitation and reemployment services. This is followed up by the local AJC making outbound calls to claimants to assist with work search registration. A reminder call is completed two weeks after an initial claim is filed. Employees listen for verbal queues from which they can make referrals to additional services. At any point, employees can report activity that would require the attention of the adjudication unit.

The WWDC is the State Workforce Development Board for Wyoming. All Workforce programs are coordinated with the WWDC. The target populations of this partnership are adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The WWDC works closely with WIOA partners to ensure Wyoming has educated workers. WWDC members refer individuals and employers to AJCs regarding training, education, and placement assistance.

Additional guidance is contained in Appendix XX – Attachment A to Wyoming’s Partner MOU.

Business Services		
Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and assistance related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches

<b>Business Services</b>		
Conduct outreach regarding the local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, or incumbent worker contracts
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment, and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Organize and conduct job fairs	Develop training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of One-Stop Center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resource issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry sector partnerships

<b>Job Seeker Services</b>		
<b>Basic Career Services</b>	<b>Individualized Career Services</b>	<b>Training</b>
Outreach, intake, and orientation to information, services, programs, tools, and resources available through the State's workforce system	Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs	Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition (ELA), may be provided in combination with the training services described above
In- and out-of-area job search and placement assistance (provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and nontraditional employment)	Referral to training services	OJT
Access to employment opportunities and labor market information	Group counseling	Incumbent Worker Training
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services	Literacy activities related to work readiness	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction that may include cooperative education
Information on the performance of the State workforce system	Individual counseling and career planning	Training programs operated by the private sector

<b>Job Seeker Services</b>		
<b>Basic Career Services</b>	<b>Individualized Career Services</b>	<b>Training</b>
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Case management for customers seeking training services; individuals in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance	Skill upgrading and retraining
Information and meaningful assistance on Unemployment Insurance claim filing	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships	Entrepreneurial training
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner Agencies and Partners services, programs, and referrals	Workforce preparation services (development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training	Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA	Post-employment follow-up services and support (This is not an individualized career service, but listed here for completeness)	Other training services as determined by the workforce Partner Agencies and Partners' governing rules

<b>Youth Services</b>	
Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential	Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate to include Adult Education services.
Paid and unpaid work experience with a component of academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities	Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved
Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
Supportive services	Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
Financial literacy education	Entrepreneurial skills training

<b>Youth Services</b>	
Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training

**C. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.**

**1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.**

Based on the information provided by Wyoming's NFJP grantee MET (Motivation, Education & Training), as well as information obtained from the state's Farm Labor Contractor, most MSFWs speak English and/or Spanish. The majority of the H2A workers who come into Wyoming are from Peru and speak Spanish as well. Farmworkers and their families will continue to need health services, schooling, and English as a second language support. DWS will continue to work to provide these services in coordination with its partners. In reference to housing needs, the exact number of employer housing units provided for workers is unknown. However, those who participated in the H2A Program have an average of just four units per employer provided for workers. No numbers were reported for Migrant Food Processing Workers. DWS will continue to provide housing inspections as required. MSFW numbers continue to decline in Wyoming.

**2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE**

Data from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Services show that the value added to Wyoming's economy by the agricultural sector was \$1.83 billion in 2019 and has been above the \$1 billion threshold since 2003. Of that total, animals and animal products accounted for \$1.13 billion, crops totaled \$419 million, and farm-related income accounted for \$288 million. In 2019, 12,000 farms and ranches used 29 million acres to raise agricultural products in Wyoming. Farmer and rancher cash receipts totaled \$1.53 billion. Cattle and calves ranked as the largest livestock commodity raised in the state, followed by hogs and sheep. Hay was the largest crop raised, followed by corn and sugar beets.

The growing season in Wyoming typically starts in the spring and goes through the fall. Depending on the weather, alfalfa hay, barley, oats, and spring wheat are planted in March and April. Sugar beets are typically planted in April. Corn planting can begin during the end of April into May. Dry beans are also planted in May.

Hay is produced across the State. The bulk of the sugar beet crop is produced in the Bighorn Basin in the northwestern part of the state. Other notable sugar beet production occurs in Goshen and Platte counties, located in the eastern part of the state.

The production of most major crops in Wyoming is no longer considered labor-intensive, which has affected available work opportunities for laborers. The use of machinery and herbicides considerably reduced the need for manual labor in planting, tending, and harvesting processes. Machines typically harvest sugar beets, barley, corn, dry beans, wheat, and oats. As a result, few agricultural workers are involved in the process. Hay farming has evolved to the point where most individual harvests are completed by one or two workers using



machines that produce and haul very large bales. Few operations rely on the 60- to 80-pound small bales, and fewer still free-stack hay without baling it. Flood irrigation is a thing of the past as most operations have gone to the use of pivots.

A considerable demand for foreign workers is present in Wyoming under the H2A program, as well as a small demand for migrant workers. In 2020, DWS processed 146 temporary agricultural job orders for in-state employers. Of those job orders, approximately 85% were for sheep herding and range livestock workers. The other 15% were made up of farmworkers and general ranch workers.

DWS anticipates that employers will continue to use herbicides and new technological developments that will limit the need for agricultural workers in Wyoming. Cold winters and hot, dry summers are typical Wyoming weather. The short growing season limits agricultural production in many places, with the frost-free period ranging from 60 to 140 days. These factors all affect the Wyoming agricultural industry.

**3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION**

Based on the information provided by Wyoming's NFJP grantee MET (Motivation, Education & Training), as well as information obtained from the state's only Farm Labor Contractor, most MSFWs speak English and/or Spanish. The majority of the H2A workers that come into the state are from Peru and speak Spanish as well. Farmworkers and their families will continue to need health services, schooling, and English as a second language support. DWS will continue to work to provide these services in coordination with its partners. During the PY 2020, approximately 15 Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers were employed in the State during the peak season and approximately 20 seasonal workers during the off-peak season. In reference to housing needs, the exact number of employer housing units provided for workers is unknown. However, those who participated in the H2A Program have an average of just four units per employer provided for workers.

**4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

Three field offices in the state actively work with MSFWs. Each of these offices has at least one AJC staff member who provides outreach services to MSFWs. These staff members receive training from the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as it becomes available and any collaborative training with other service providers for MSFWs, including NFJP grantees. Staff members will complete the online training modules on the Workforce GPS website related to outreach and MSFWs.

The SMA has developed a great working relationship with the State's only Farm Labor Contractor, who has helped to identify any day-haul operators in the area. Staff members visit the operators every quarter to provide information and services to MSFWs. DWS also reaches out to workers at their worksites and homes, and at the sites of other MSFW service providers. Outreach will be accomplished from Wyoming's AJCs by Workforce Specialists as part of their assigned duties.

As stated in e(1)(B) of this plan, estimates of the number of such farmworkers in the state have been consistently low. Wyoming is not designated by the U.S. Employment and Training Administration as a "significant state" for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker purposes. Also, none of Wyoming's local One-Stop Centers are designated as a "significant local office." Few MSFWs are being reported or otherwise identified as being in the State.

The SMA will continue to work with NFJP Grantee (MET) as well as the local farm labor contractor to locate farmworkers and their families who are not being reached by normal intake.

The SMA continues to offer technical assistance through quarterly conference calls and schedules in-person training as needed, including new employee training. The SMA has plans to address the required training for staff members related to sexual harassment and human trafficking. The SMA is coordinating sexual harassment training with the State's Human Resource Division and has teamed up with the Blue Campaign to provide field staff with training modules related to Human/Labor Trafficking. The SMA continues to be a member of the Governor's Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force that is sponsored by the State's Attorney General's Office. Field staff will attend any training that becomes available related to sexual harassment and human trafficking. An awareness card for human trafficking is in the process of being developed and will be printed in both English and Spanish.

All of the AJCs post bulletins concerning worker rights and other important topics. Furthermore, all workforce staff are trained in using the complaint system. While there have been few MSFW complaints in recent years, staff members know how to assist the workers. The only real obstacle in accomplishing this and the provision of other services is the lack of readily-available Spanish-speaking staff in each office. However, AJCs have ready access to translation services, and the Wyoming at Work System is available in Spanish.

All DWS outreach workers are merit system employees from Wyoming's local AJCs. These employees have regular contact with the UI system, including the benefits program and employer taxation. Individuals performing outreach, like other local center staff, have access to the "UI 101" video, which provides an explanation of the UI system for claimants. The video answers basic questions about the processes for determining benefit amounts, filing a claim, eligibility issues, etc. Employees also have access to monthly updates to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about UI benefits and the UI tax system. Outreach workers will be instructed in the methodology for registering claimants for work, and what is required for work search activities. They will also have a basic awareness of the UI profiling system—its purpose and requirements; and will know how to refer employers to information sources for UI tax questions.

Because of the One-Stop System that Wyoming uses in its local AJCs, outreach workers are oriented to other organizations in the centers and have the opportunity for routine contact with them, so MSFWs can be referred to those organizations for help, as needed. These organizations include the DVR, which provides disability services; the Workers' Compensation Division; Labor Standards Division; Wyoming (OSHA) Division; and the Department of Family Services. Continuous orientation and information sharing occurs. All DWS state merit staff are provided with proactive opportunities to ensure that they are able to provide the highest quality service to both job seekers and employers through training conducted via PowerPoint presentations, training conferences, and conference calls. New staff orientation is provided with self-paced training modules and workshops in areas such as customer service. They are also instructed specifically in their duties as outreach workers. The State Monitor Advocate/Foreign Labor Certification Programs Manager conducts staff training and works with the outreach workers in the provision of informational seminars.

Workforce Specialists prepare materials that present DWS's services. Such materials are shared with the farmworkers and their families. MET and other service providers have indicated a willingness to share them with workers and their families. In addition, DWS shares health and safety materials and complaint system directions.

Workers and their families are assisted in filing complaints. As much as possible, services are provided to each Migrant or Seasonal Farm Worker in their own language. DWS provides opportunities for individuals to register in the Wyoming at Work labor management system and provides orientation regarding its use. The system is accessible in Spanish.

MET does fieldwork to reach MSFWs who may not visit its office in Powell, WY. Such workers might be in the Powell area or elsewhere in the Bighorn Basin. The AJC in Powell is near the MET office. The Bighorn Basin is also served by One-Stop Centers in Cody and Worland. AJC staff will coordinate with MET staff to provide outreach services where needed and in the workers' language. Because MET also serves dependents of farmworkers, the coordinated effort has the potential for providing effective services to more people.

#### **4. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM**

Services are provided under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act. The One-Stop System in Wyoming, which includes all local AJCs, administers both acts. Under WIOA, states are provided with significant staffing flexibility to innovate within the workforce system, with various allowable statewide employment and training activities. These efforts are meant to ensure a high-quality workforce system and continuous improvement. Wyoming uses this approach to serve both farmworkers and non-farmworkers.

DWS has partnered with Motivation Education and Technology (MET), the National Farm Worker Jobs Program grantee, which administers WIOA Section 167 in Wyoming. DWS also coordinates with other organizations to provide services to farmworkers and agricultural employers. MET is not expected to be located within One-Stop Centers. However, in Powell, MET's local office is located close to an AJC. Easy access is available for personnel from both offices. DWS continues to foster a quality working relationship with MET through the memorandum-of-understanding process to ensure that all available and necessary services are provided. These services include outreach to MSFWs, as defined previously in this plan.

Career services, training, and related assistance are provided to eligible farmworkers and related youth through WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Program. These services may be received in person at the job centers. Wagner-Peyser services are available electronically through the Wyoming at Work System, which is available in English and Spanish.

In-person services include assistance in registering for work in the Wyoming at Work System, resume preparation and repository, job matching, labor market information, skills testing, and career planning. Priority of service for veterans, which is enforced through federal and state policies, is provided to MSFWs. Through the job centers, workers also have access to the full array of other services DWS and its partners provide.

Services are also available for individuals with disabilities. DWS uses a productive internal partnership between DVR and the Employment and Training Division to serve the needs of this population.

DVR maintains an active presence in most local AJCs where workers are served within the One-Stop System. DVR representatives also travel to other centers where a continuous presence is not maintained. Services for individuals with disabilities are provided based on need and coordinated plans.

A variety of methods is used to share costs between the two divisions. For example, each organization may pay a portion of an individual's training program. DVR also provides adaptive devices for some clients in training. In addition, the divisions coordinate to assist secondary school-aged students with individual education plans designed to help them achieve a high school diploma or a high-school equivalency education certificate.

Career services, training, and related assistance will be provided to eligible farmworkers and related youth through WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Program. These services may be received in person at the One Stop Centers. Wagner-Peyser services are available electronically through the Wyoming at Work System, which is available in English and Spanish.

The Employment Service Complaint System is marketed through cooperative relationships with other MSFW service providers, the NFJP grantee (MET), and through outreach to the workers. Instructions for the complaint system are being incorporated into DWS's Agricultural Recruitment System policies and procedures that are available to all local AJC staff and DWS administrators and managers, which will greatly facilitate marketing awareness and use of the complaint system. Written materials, posters, and verbal communication in areas farmworkers gather, such as community dances, churches, and other community events, will be distributed.

Staff members assigned to the Foreign Labor Certification Unit provide services to agricultural employers. Employers are apprised of all services available through the workforce system, including the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and any new changes that arise in the H2A process. Service for the seasonal agricultural employer and MSFWs employers are provided by workforce center staff through planned personal visits and promotional telephone contacts.

#### **4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

## **A. COLLABORATION**

Since the last AOP, DWS has formalized a memorandum of understanding with MET, the WIOA Section 167 NFJP grantee in Wyoming, to facilitate information sharing and coordination of services to farmworkers, including outreach activities. Other memoranda will also be explored based on Wyoming policy regarding such associations. MET has one Spanish-speaking employee on staff. One-Stop Center staff members have access to written, website, and phone information on programs and can disseminate information in the appropriate format for the customer.

Through Language Line and 211, staff can get assistance for customers who are non-English speakers. Staff members provide verbal referrals after conducting the initial needs assessment. This information is also available for verbal referrals in the resource room as well as in print. Application assistance is available through One-Stop staff.

In addition to MET, DWS will continue to contact and coordinate with other organizations known to serve farmworkers or those who could potentially serve them. DWS will seek out other organizations that might help to provide services and partner with those organizations whenever opportunities arise. Some organizations that were working in Wyoming, such as the Migrant Head Start Program, are no longer funded. The numbers and types of organizations that provide services to MSFWs in Wyoming are continually changing and declining.

In the most recent reporting year, MET provided services to about 20 farmworkers. Some of these workers were contacted through outreach. MET and DWS anticipate that about the same number will receive services during this plan period via similar venues.

How many MSFWs were served by other organizations in Wyoming is unknown. Migrant Health is no longer available. Frequently, definitions of farmworkers used by other organizations vary somewhat from DWS definitions. Nevertheless, DWS will coordinate as much as possible with these partners.

MET and DWS anticipate that most MSFWs will be found in the Bighorn Basin of northwest Wyoming. DWS, through its three AJC locations in the area, plans to coordinate closely with MET and others to provide outreach services. AJCs in other regions of the State will also provide outreach based on the established need.

## **REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

DWS updated its Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) as required. The plan was put out for public comment February 3, 2020 through May 4, 2020, statewide, and was published in the statewide newspaper. The plan was sent to the NFJP grantee, public agencies, and other organizations as well. For the AOP, DWS received two comments; these suggestions were incorporated in the final state plan.

## **A. DATA ASSESSMENT**

During the past four years, DWS has shown improvement in its services to MSFWs and is meeting the established goals for quality and quantitatively proportionate services. The improvements are based on continuous education, efforts to improve, and increased data entry. During the 3rd quarter of PY-2018, DWS reached all five equity ratio indicators in the LEARS Reporting System. DWS continues to struggle with meeting the minimum service levels portrayed in the LEARS Reporting System. These efforts continue to be hampered by the ever-changing circumstances and the declining number of MSFWs coming into the State. Organizations have ceased to operate farmworker programs or have lost funding to continue. The newness of some relationships between DWS employees and its partners have made establishing a good rhythm between partners and customers difficult.

To reach its goals, DWS will renew its efforts to reach out to all potential partners and establish effective working relationships. Efforts to establish a better working relationship with MET have already been made. The SMA will continue to educate field staff; an area of emphasis will be identifying MSFWs, registration, and data sharing. The SMA will also continue to work closely with the State's only farm labor contractor on identifying MSFWs and seasonal workers.

## **A. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS**

The SMA continues to work with partner organizations and the State's only farm labor contractor to identify MSFWs in the State. However, these efforts have been hampered by changing circumstances precipitated at least in part by low numbers of such workers and their families. Some organizations have ceased to operate farmworker programs or have lost funding; others changed locations. The newness of some relationships between DWS and partner organizations has made establishing a rhythm that will benefit each partner and the customer difficult. DWS will renew its efforts to reach out to all potential partners and establish effective working relationships.

In an effort to build a stronger relationship with MET, the current SMA has made numerous contacts with Wyoming's MET representative both by phone or in person. The SMA will continue to attend the MAFO National Farm Worker's Conferences with WY's MET representative. An area of emphasis will be data sharing, where possible, if data sharing would be useful to the partners.

DWS was successful in making some improvements in its Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker reporting system. This was accomplished by working with the system contractor, Geographic Solutions, Inc., and the national Monitor Advocate's Office. The State Monitor Advocate feels the system is providing more accurate data and continues to monitor system output.

Policies and procedures for both the H2A Agricultural Program and Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers have been developed. The current SMA has updated these policies and procedures and shared them on the DWS education and training website to which all Program Managers, Center Managers, and Field Staff have access. A Program Strategy Team has been developed that includes the SMA to cross-train other Program Managers on the FLC Program, as well as the duties of the SMA if they should be absent for a period of time.

As reported during the last plan period, very little outreach activity has been conducted because of the very low number of Migrant & Seasonal Workers in the area/State. Greater focus will be placed on finding such workers if they are in the State and providing the necessary outreach to them through the One-Stop Centers and MET.

Outreach can be provided through DWS via personal contacts, distribution of printed materials that are printed in the MSFW natural languages, community opportunity fairs, and migrant health fairs. Technology can also be used based on operational capability. DWS continues to pursue these activities.

Core workforce services, intensive services, training, and supportive services are provided to individual workers who visit the AJCs. Language assistance is also available through Language Line and 211. Services are provided under the provisions of the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIOA.

Filling agricultural job orders with domestic workers has become a challenge for DWS, as the current workforce doesn't seem to be interested in those types of jobs. DWS continues to ensure that any interested domestic workers will have the same opportunities for employment. Wyoming has not identified many MSFWs in the past few years. The Wyoming at Work System identified only 27 such workers for the period of 04/01/2020 through 03/31/2021. Three field offices in the State serve Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers. The SMA will team up with the agency's Employment & Training Monitor to monitor these field offices during the peak season for MSFWs.

## **A. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE**

The Wyoming State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

### **WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES**

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	<b>Include</b>
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with One-Stop Centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3))	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW One-Stop Centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within five calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes

### WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	64.5		64.5	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	65.8		65.8	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,251		\$5,251	
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

#### A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

The Adult Education (AE) program in Wyoming has adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and the English Language Proficiency Standards for all Adult Education and Literacy providers funded under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The CCRS are aligned with the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in English, language arts, and math, as adopted in June 2012. The Wyoming State Board of Education has made no amendments to the original agreement, which aligns to Common Core State Standards. This alignment offers challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 195, as amended [20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)]. In addition, Wyoming's Adult Education programs have adopted and are using, in instruction, the Wyoming Employability Skill Standards and the Wyoming Social Capital Skill standards. (see <https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education/directors/>)

The College and Career Readiness Standards ensure that literacy students, AE high-school equivalency students, bridge students, and all workplace learners exit the Wyoming Adult Education programs with the skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education, training programs, and/or for employment. The standards reflect the knowledge and skills that students need for success in the 21st century, inclusive of problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, research, and the ability to use technology. The standards were fully implemented on July 1, 2016, in all local AE programs.

The adoption of the CCRS and Career Pathways model drives professional development, acquisition of materials and technology-based resources, as well as the selection of formative and summative evaluation

processes. Aligning the standards and career pathways provides all adult learners with a similar academic structure so that they are prepared for post-secondary education, training, and workforce without the need for remediation.

AE providers must ensure that all instructors implement standards-based education in their programs and do so through integrated learning maps/plans, lesson plans, and the State-sanctioned observation tool entitled the “Standards in Action Checklist.” In addition, the State requires that at least 80% of all instructors at a local provider site participate in ongoing State-sponsored professional development that supports both standards-based education and emerging Career Pathways essential components of reading, numeracy, writing, and instruction in English as a Second Language, Integrated Education and Training (IET/IELCE) models, bridge programs, or workplace literacy.

#### **A. LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

##### **ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)**

Wyoming conducts a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for eligible entities to apply for AE grant awards for both federal and state funds. Successful applicants are awarded a five-year renewable grant to provide the educational services listed above.

Eligible providers able to write for these grants are organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include the following:

1. Local educational agency;
2. A community-or faith-based organization;
3. A volunteer literacy organization;
4. An institution of higher education;
5. A public or private nonprofit agency;
6. A library;
7. A public housing authority;
8. A nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
9. A consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
10. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

##### **Funding eligible local providers**

The WCCC uses the 13 considerations specified in WIOA Section 231(e) to fund eligible providers in establishing and operating programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Request for Proposal includes the 13 considerations and asks respondents to summarize how they meet the described elements. Readers are also provided with a rubric and scoring guide that includes these considerations. The funding mechanism used to fund local programs uses a performance-based formula that includes a flat-rate component; enrollment targets, dropout rates, and poverty levels with weighting factors for rural areas. Performance considers educational functioning-level increases, employment, high-school equivalency completions, and entry into post-secondary education or training. Distribution of funds to eligible providers follows the state provisions guidance in WIOA Title II, Subtitle B, Sec. 222.

Local Administrative Costs defined in WIOA Section 233 are limited. Not less than 95% shall be expended for carrying out adult education and family literacy activities; the remaining amount, not to exceed 5%, shall be used for planning, administration (including carrying out the requirements of section 116), professional development, and the activities described in paragraphs (3) and (5) of section 232.

**SPECIAL RULE:** In cases where the cost limits described above are too restrictive to allow for the activities described in subsection (a)(2), the eligible provider shall negotiate with the State to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes.

WIOA Sec. 231(e), which describes the 13 considerations in awarding grants, is also followed.

The WCCC advertises the request for proposals as a five-year, competitive grant to all eligible providers in Wyoming. The RFP will include sections to apply for: 1) Adult Education; 2) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education; and 3) Corrections Education with descriptions of allowable activities.

To provide direct and equitable access to apply for Title II grant funds, a 'Public Notice' is posted electronically on the Wyoming Community College Commission website, and the same notice is advertised in prominent newspapers across the state. A minimum of one Bidder's Conference will be hosted for potential applicants to answer questions and clarify criteria contained in the RFP. Questions and answers will be posted on the WCCC website for public reference. Direct application to the WCCC for all applications is used. Readers are provided a rubric to rank applications for funding purposes.

**REQUIRED LOCAL ACTIVITIES:** WCCC requires that each eligible provider receiving a grant or contract under Subsection (a) use the grant or contract to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently.

### **Scope**

The WCCC funds local eligible providers to deliver adult education services to 'eligible adults' 16 years and older, who are not required to be enrolled in secondary school. The scope of the local AE program activities must demonstrate success with all levels of students, including those with low levels of literacy, those with disabilities (including learning disabilities), and/or English language learners in services described below. In addition, providers must deliver students with the skills needed for successful transition to post-secondary education, training, or employment.

WIOA has renewed emphasis on aligning comprehensive adult education services with the integrated services of other core program partners. The development of a seamless Workforce Development System of complementary services is the primary focus. AE providers, as one aspect of their program, will need to effectively demonstrate their ability to provide bridge programming and/or integrated education and training that is offered concurrently and contextually with workforce training, and workforce preparation activities for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

With recent changes in Wyoming's economy, a greater focus is being placed on increasing low-skilled individuals' transition to post-secondary education and skills training, especially for the Low and High Intermediate students, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) NRS levels 3 & 4. Contextualized curriculum and materials to transition students between the ESL levels and AE and into Integrated Education and Training (IET) activities as appropriate are being developed. The State has also placed a greater emphasis on the alignment of AE programming to statewide economic, education, and workforce initiatives as described above. Local programs are beginning to align program offerings to workforce and economic needs identified by Next Generation Sector Partnerships, Perkins V (for career and technical education), and other economic and workforce programs initiated by the State of Wyoming. The curriculum and materials used for these programs are developed using career pathways models and have used OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework for all components.

The Wyoming Community College Commission requires eligible provider applicants to demonstrate their effectiveness by detailing previous program performance and past effectiveness. All applicants, both prior recipients and new applicants, provide data demonstrating their ability to help students make measurable academic gains in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language. Prior recipients use LACES (the AE program's student data management system for the State of Wyoming) data to show how they have helped students make learning gains.

New applicant organizations must include data demonstrating student learning gains, especially with low-



literacy level students and English language learners. The application must demonstrate how the students will obtain the knowledge and skills needed to successfully transition to post-secondary education, skills training, and/or employment.

Applicants must also submit a minimum of four years of program data detailing the applicant's previous experience in grant management. The applicant's organization must also provide an organizational chart that details Adult Education in the organization, as well as the qualifications of all Adult Education employees. These requirements ensure that potential new programs provide background and experience that includes services tailored for the primary AE population(s) and areas served. They also ensure that all institutional applicants are prepared to implement an effective Adult Education program by providing for direct leadership and guidance to the program. The RFP will also require a description of project management, which will help to ensure successful outcomes.

All programs must provide sufficient intensity and quality of instruction for participants to make substantial learning gains. Programs must provide flexible schedules, inclusive of distance-learning protocols, to coordinate with local support services (child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete adult education programs of study.

### **Content**

Each eligible AE provider must verify that activities are conducted by highly-qualified instructors, counselors, or administrators, and confirm that all staff will participate in ongoing high-quality professional development.

Local programs use a three-tiered professional development planning tool that incorporates local, state, and federal trainings to offer a variety of instructional strategies that engage students and promote student persistence and retention. Contextualized instruction, participatory learning, peer tutoring, individualized instruction, and distance-learning capabilities are included. Career counseling/advising enhances the instructional strategies used to integrate academics and soft skills/social capital skills to improve the students' ability to gain employment, enter post-secondary education, enter a work experience or training (pre) apprenticeship program.

Curriculum that supports high school equivalency certificate attainment, measurable skill gains, workforce/workplace literacy, and emerging career pathways are employed in all Adult Education and Literacy Program services. Instruction in content areas (reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, and English language acquisition) are to be delivered by staff knowledgeable in the essential components of reading instruction, or who will participate in state leadership activities focused on the essential components of reading. Instructional staff must use effective, scientific, evidence-based or research-based instructional delivery models for students in all content areas. Prospective program providers must articulate how distance learning and other modes of technology will be integrated into instruction to support digital-literacy attainment, as well as to meet students' specific learning needs.

With the onset of COVID-19, Adult Education providers in Wyoming were immediately forced to pivot from face-to-face instruction to a new delivery mode that relied entirely upon virtual classrooms. Although the transformation was a challenge, local providers have, perhaps, changed the face of adult education classrooms in Wyoming forever. Adult Education classrooms will now use hybrid classrooms that integrate technologies such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Canvas, as these have been very successful with most learners in Wyoming. With the use of virtual and/or hybrid classrooms that integrate distance-instructional methodologies, students who were previously unable to attend in person were provided with the means to actively engage in Adult Education classrooms. Students in the most rural areas of the State were also provided with an opportunity to participate in the larger virtual classroom at the provider's main campus. Collaborative efforts between providers also expanded opportunities for students to attend virtual classes through multiple providers. In at least one area of the State (Jackson, WY), ESL enrollments are thriving as the use of virtual classrooms has seen enrollments expand across State lines. Strong cohorts (often family cohorts), coupled with comprehensive provider services, have also helped to grow this student population.

AE program staff will work with core partner programs, local post-secondary institutions, and Next Generation Sector Partnership (NextGen) committees to develop educational programming that meets the needs identified through Next Gen. Using ongoing labor market analysis will also be necessary so that instructors and program administrators have a working knowledge of regional career opportunities to plan appropriate instruction for students.

AE program staff will also make appropriate referrals to both internal and external agencies so that barriers to employment and other system challenges for students can be successfully negotiated. Student needs are identified by local AE program staff, and appropriate referrals are made through a State-approved system so that the State can review the tracking of referrals. Referrals are also part of the Infrastructure Agreement put in place for the One-Stop System in Wyoming. Local training is provided to AE staff on how to make appropriate quality referrals.

Eligible provider applicants will also articulate how they plan to share students' academic and career plans with other agencies and support services within the local One-Stop System. Program staff will cooperate with agency partners to provide wrap-around services needed for the success of mutual clients.

All AE providers must ensure local AE staff use state-required intake forms, follow AE state assessment and distance-learning policies, enter and validate student data in a timely manner, and ensure program compliance to federal and state regulations for Adult Education. In August of 2021, the State began use of an electronic intake form that automatically feeds into the LACES database. The primary purpose of this new intake form is to offer students, core partners, and other stakeholders easy access to the registration process for Adult Education classes/programs throughout the state. The AE State Office will provide ongoing training to maintain accurate data sets for data matching and statewide performance reporting to the federal government.

All AE providers must ensure their activities provide contextualized instruction, including integrated education and training and/or bridge programming whenever possible, to allow students to acquire the skills needed to transition to and complete post-secondary education and skills training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In preparation for the development and launch of new Integrated Education and Training models, nearly all providers in Wyoming completed the OCTAE-sponsored IET Design Camp training in Spring or Fall of 2021. In addition, several new initiatives are planned at various AE locations throughout the State. New bridge programs that help transition low-skilled participants into post-secondary are being launched in FY 21/22, as well as at least two workplace literacy programs. The State's sole IELCE provider and the IET programs are currently retooling programming to include the new NRS MSG measures. And finally, plans are in motion to launch at least three pre-apprenticeships programs in health care, plumbing, and manufacturing in early 2022.

### **Adult Education Family Literacy Act Definitions & Regulations (AEFLA SEC. 203)**

The State of Wyoming and the Adult Education Family Literacy Act Definitions and Regulations (AEFLA SEC) 203 WIOA Section 203 defines terms that are specific to the AEFLA, including:

**Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.

**Career Pathway:** A combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

- (a) Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- (b) Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including registered apprenticeships;
- (c) Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- (d) Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

- (e) Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a way that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- (f) Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized post-secondary credential; and
- (g) Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

**Eligible Individual:** In accordance with WIOA Title II (Sec. 203 (4)), the term ‘adult education’ means services or instruction below the post-secondary level for an individual:

- (a) Who has attained 16 years of age;
- (b) Who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
- (c) Who is—
  - (i) Basic Skills Deficient;
  - (ii) Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
  - (iii) An English language learner.

**Eligible Provider:** Eligible providers are any organizations who have ‘demonstrated effectiveness’ in providing adult education and literacy activities and may include:

- (a) Local educational agencies; community-based or faith-based organizations;
- (b) Volunteer literacy organizations;
- (c) Institutions of higher education;
- (d) Public or private nonprofit agencies;
- (e) Libraries;
- (f) Public housing authorities;
- (g) A nonprofit institution having the ability to provide adult education and literacy services to adults; and
- (h) A consortium of agencies, organizations, institutions, and libraries described above (Section 203(5)).

To be considered eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data on its record in improving the skills of eligible individuals, in particular individuals who are basic-skills deficient in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in this application for funds. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to post-secondary education and training.

An eligible provider may meet the requirements in two ways:

- (A) An eligible provider that has been funded under Title II of the Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.
- (B) An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving Basic Skills Deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in the first paragraph of this section. See WIOA Final Rules Subpart C, §463.24 and 29 U.S.C 3272(5)

**English Language Acquisition Program:** A program of instruction—

- (a) Designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and
- (b) That leads to—
  - (i) Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to post-

secondary education and training; or

(ii) Employment.

**English Language Learner:** An eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language, and—

- (a) Whose native language is a language other than English; or
- (b) Who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

**Family Literacy Activities:** Activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- (a) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for post-secondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency;
- (b) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children;
- (c) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and
- (d) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

**Integrated Education and Training (IET):** A service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE):** Education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

The IELCE program under section 243 (a) of WIOA is designed to:

- Prepare adults who are English language learners, and place such adults in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
- Integrate with the local Workforce Development System and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

**Literacy:** An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

**Post-secondary Educational Institution:**

- (A) An institution of higher education that provides not less than a 2-year program of instruction that is acceptable for credit toward a bachelor's degree;
- (B) A tribally controlled college or university; or
- (C) A nonprofit educational institution offering certificate or apprenticeship programs at the post-secondary level.

**Target Populations (State Definition):** Target populations include individuals with multiple barriers to employment and educational attainment, including individuals with disabilities, criminal offenders, single parents, and individuals with limited English proficiency or low levels of literacy.

**WIOA Referral (State Definition):** 'Referrals' made within the CommunityPro system that involve the participant and the participant's needs/wants to meet his/her goal(s). An individual is referred to a partner

program for services, workshops, education, and training, in an effort to provide inter-agency partnership.

**Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

**Workforce Preparation Activities:** Activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment.

**Adult Education Allowable Activities:**

In accordance with WIOA Title II (Sec. 231), all providers receiving Adult Education grant funds through the Wyoming Community College Commission must provide the following services: adult education and literacy activities that may include English language acquisition, integrated English literacy and civics education, workplace education, workforce preparation activities or integrated education and training. Details of these activities must be provided in each program's proposal. Successful applicants are not required to provide all activities. Allowable activities include the following:

- (A) **Adult Education:** Academic instruction and educational services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to:
  - Read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
  - Transition to post-secondary education and training; and
  - Obtain employment.
- (B) **Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Instruction and education services below a post-secondary level in reading, writing, and speaking in English, and computing and solving problems. These services increase a student's ability to achieve a secondary school diploma or equivalent, transition to post-secondary education and training, and obtain employment.
- (C) **English Language Acquisition:** Adult education and literacy activities for English language learners with an additional skill requirement, comprehension of the English language.
- (D) **Family Literacy Activities:** Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. To offer family literacy activities as defined in WIOA requires coordination with other services for the children's component. Family literacy defined in WIOA must integrate all of the following activities:
  1. **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education:** Provides immigrants and English learners access to English language acquisition services and civics education and will include workforce training. English infused with civics education helps immigrants and English learners understand the American system of government and what it means to be a citizen and to be involved in civics activities. To live and work in the United States means not only a command of the language, but equally important are the civics-related skills and knowledge necessary to become involved parents, workers, and community members. Therefore, every adult education and literacy council program offering English language acquisition services will also include civics education.
  2. **Workforce Preparation:** Activities, programs, or services designed to help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills and employability skills such as critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills. These activities include competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment. Workforce preparation skills will be integrated into the adult basic education and literacy curriculum, therefore occurring concurrently with adult basic and literacy skills instruction. Per grant assurances,

teachers will integrate technology use in their lesson plans, and all students will have access to and use computers and technology to enhance their learning and digital literacy skills.

3. **Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities:** Instruction at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. Instruction will include contextualized literacy, English language acquisition, and workforce preparation at Educational Functioning Levels appropriate to learners. Successful workplace literacy activities involve strong partnerships with employers or employee organizations in the design and delivery of the instructional program based on workplace needs.
4. **Integrated education and training activities:** Instruction in basic academic skills and/or English language acquisition skills, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training contextualized for specific occupations or occupational clusters. Education will be provided in the context of industry-specific needs that involve employers and integrated with occupational skills training. Programs will provide work-relevant instruction through career pathways and integrated education and training activities. Instruction will be offered at Educational Functioning Levels appropriate to learners. The purpose of instruction will be education and career advancement. Providers will assist students in their roles as parents and family members by providing foundational skills that enable them to support their children's learning needs and improve economic self-sufficiency for their families.

## Organization

The Adult Education program application requires each respondent to clearly articulate how their instructional delivery model will be aligned, coordinated, and linked to statewide economic, educational, and/or workforce initiatives as identified through the Governor's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives and/or through Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

Programs are also required to show how instructional delivery models are coordinated and linked with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community with the goal of developing career pathways with local partners. Partnerships may include elementary and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, state workforce investment board, One-Stop Centers, job-training programs, social service agencies, business and industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations. Alignments must include flexible scheduling so that adult education services coordinate with the students' wrap-around support services and logistical needs. The provider applicant must demonstrate the ability to provide services to individuals with a disability. The delivery model must be of sufficient intensity and duration so that students can make educational gains and so that they can exit the program with the skills needed to attain a career and/or meet educational goals.

Each AE provider must have the capacity to support the high-quality data information system (LACES) necessary to collect and report demographics, measurable skill gains, and outcomes appropriate to the services being provided.

Primary indicators of performance for the WIOA annual statewide performance report include:

- Participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exiting the program;
- Participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exiting the program;
- Median earnings from unsubsidized employment in the second quarter after exiting the program;
- Percentage of students who attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND enrolled in post-secondary education/training within one year of exiting the AE program;
- Percentage of students who attained a secondary school diploma/recognized equivalent AND employed within one year of exiting the AE program;
- Percentage of students who attained a post-secondary credential while enrolled OR within one year of exiting the AE program; and

- Percentage of students who attained any type of credential (unduplicated).

All indicators are collected by local providers for federal reporting purposes. Adult education providers are an integral part of the Career Pathways System in Wyoming. In FY 2020/21, the State formally adopted and recognized the role Adult Education plays in the Career Pathways Systems for Wyoming. Through a guidance letter issued by the Wyoming Community College Commission and by the development of the Career Pathways map below, providers and the local community colleges were provided with the clarification(s) needed to begin using the Ability to Benefit Clause for federal financial aid.

Bridge programs have been developed to connect students to post-secondary education and training as identified through career exploration models. IETs and IELCEs are being developed by some local providers in the State. Next Generation Sector Partnerships, as implemented by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (the Local Board), are identifying local economic/business training needs, and AE is providing academic service support through WIOA allowable activities to support emerging and established industry needs as requested. Training needs specifically identified by a Next Generation Sector Partnership are addressed through multiple Adult Education Centers.



AE provider applicants must clearly describe how the local adult educational activities partner with other educational institutions (high schools, colleges, or other technical training programs), local workforce partners, vocational rehabilitation, registered apprenticeships, and other agencies to fulfill Adult Education's role under WIOA and to help ensure that complete wrap-around services are available to qualified participants.

A description of the provider's plans for their integrated education and training and/or bridge program design must be provided.

AE local directors will also participate, at the invitation of community leadership implementing the Next Generation Sector Partnership model, in meetings that bring together key partners to listen and assist in problem-solving and solution development for the issues brought forward.

Required progress reporting will include monthly data reports on measurable skill gain, financial status, and high school equivalency attainment. Quarterly reports will detail successes and challenges, while comprehensive end-of-year reports will include narratives, tables, a data-quality checklist, and other federal/state components.

All AE providers requesting funding for English language acquisition programs must clearly demonstrate a need for program services and civics education. Program instruction must be provided by high-quality instructors who attend ongoing professional development activities.

#### **A. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS**

Grants for Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals authorized under WIOA Section 225 are competed for using the same announcement used for the Public Adult Education Instructional Program under Section 231. The competitive Request for Proposal includes the requirements and priorities of Subpart C in Title II of WIOA. The priorities include:

- Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.
- The WCCC requests that prospective provider applicants include a description of how program priorities will be established for individuals who are likely to leave the institution within five years of participation. Each applicant will identify the academic programs they intend to offer to these individuals.

Wyoming's correctional facilities that receive 225 funds are allowed to use these funds for Adult Education and Literacy activities that can include: special education, secondary school credit, integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and transition to / re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Each program reports inmate/participant data in LACES, the same reporting system used by the AE programs. This includes assessments, attendance, high school equivalency testing, and basic demographic information. In addition, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports must be sent to the State AE office.

In FY 20/21, the Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC), in conjunction with Adult Education (AE), Department of Workforce Services (DWS), and the Federal Office of Apprenticeship, began planning a pre-apprenticeship in plumbing for at least one DOC facility. DOC, AE, DWS, and the Federal Office of Apprenticeship plan to have this program operational by July of 2022. Each eligible agency that receives assistance provided under this section shall annually prepare and submit to the State a report on the progress of the programs and activities carried out under this section, including the relative rate of recidivism for the criminal offenders served. Only academic gains are reported.

Awards are made to provider applicants offering adult education services to correctional and other institutions (prisons, jails, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders). Distribution of funds shall follow Title II Subtitle B-State provisions, which states "Sec 222 (a) (1) shall use not less than 82.5% of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, of which not more than 20% of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225" —Programs for Corrections Education and other Institutionalized Individuals.

#### **A. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Wyoming's English language acquisition population is approximately 16% of the students served by adult education. The majority are undocumented. The rural nature of our state and the dispersed population make



offering an IELCE program challenging for most program providers. Other compounding factors include an inability to obtain and translate transcripts from the native country, work and family commitments, and an overall inability to complete the IET component of an IELCE because of low English language proficiency levels.

IELCE services are intended for adult English language learners (ELLs), including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. As with adult education students, the focus is on providing the ELL student with the knowledge and skills necessary for entry into the workforce, post-secondary education, or an integrated education and skills training program.

IELCE programs in Wyoming are delivered in combination with an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model by co-enrolling participants in a literacy and English language acquisition program of study that incorporates instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizens and civic participation as described under WIOA § 463.33, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training (for a specific industry sector). The IET component is optional, but is offered to enrolled participants. Unfortunately, very few IELCE students have completed the IET component.

In FY 21/22, Wyoming's sole provider of IELCE services will undergo a massive redesign that will focus on the Health Services Career Pathway instead of individual careers. This redesign will also see the use of English for Specific Purposes (Health Care) taught in a classroom with a curriculum that integrates Civics, digital literacy, and workforce preparation skills. The provider is currently working with the local community college (the training provider) to identify a single set of learning objectives so that the IELCE will meet federal requirements (§ 463.37).

Each of the three IET components (adult education, workforce preparation, and occupational training) must be integrated, must provide sufficient intensity and quality, and must be based upon the most rigorous research.

IELCE programs are combined with integrated education and training activities as students demonstrate readiness to participate in the workforce training portion. The training and combined education will be concurrent and use contextualized instruction in a high-demand industry or career cluster.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Funding for this program is at the minimum level of \$60,000 statewide and is offered through a competitive grant process at the same time the regular AE grant is completed. Funding is offered to the one provider most likely to be successful through community support, business collaboration, and partnerships with AE, as determined by their application.

Each provider application is reviewed for the ability to provide the necessary English literacy acquisition education, the training components, and the applicant's past service to English Language Learner (ELL) populations. The applicant's successful partnerships and collaborative agreements with core partners are also considered when reviewing applications for funding.

When awarding the IELCE grant, the State uses a targeted approach to define the area of the State that has the greatest need. The provider will submit in their application a design for a project that includes an in-demand industry, as identified by the local Next Generation Sector Partnership Committee.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.**

The IELCE program provides educational services that consist of literacy and English language acquisition integrated with civics education, inclusive of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. In accordance with the Act, focus is placed on the engagement of adult education and literacy providers, employers, and occupational trainers to assist adults in becoming literate and obtaining the

knowledge and skills essential for employment and self-sufficiency.

Through collaborative partnerships with DWS, ELLs are provided with occupational skill training and placement in occupations in high-demand industries, as identified by the local Next Generation Sector Partnership Group.

**Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.**

Local IELCE providers are actively engaged with the community Next Generation Sector Partnership that assists in the recruitment and development of industry-specific curricula. Within the Workforce Development System, key stakeholders provide IELCE participants with professional training and certifications for those interested. Local Workforce Centers also play a key role in helping to recruit participants and placing participants in occupations.

#### **A. STATE LEADERSHIP**

##### **1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA**

The State distributes no more than 12.5% of Title II funds allocated to the State to carry out the required four leadership activities.

**The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and One-Stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the strategy identified in the unified State plan under section 102 of the combined State plan under section 103, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.**

Throughout both state and local levels of Adult Education in Wyoming, a precedent for collaboration and alignment of services amongst core partners has developed, particularly among the WIOA core partners. Each year, the State and WIOA core partners collaborate to provide a statewide Summer Institute that focuses on the development of career pathways alignments as identified by the Wyoming Business Council and local Next Generation Sector Partnerships. As increasing numbers of Next Generation Sector Partnerships are identified and launch throughout the State, local adult education programs are tasked with implementing contextualized Career Pathways Systems. The Summer Institute provides local providers and partnering agencies with an opportunity to address professional development needs to better target regional economic pathways. Topics included at these Summer Institutes can include content standards, instructional strategies and methodologies, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to post-secondary education, contextualized instruction for specific industry sectors, use of technology, distance education and the use of virtual classrooms, virtual testing, and services to students with disabilities. The Institute also provides a means for the dissemination of best practices, which is of particular importance in the COVID-19 era as providers' creativity in effective program design needs to be shared throughout the State.

Wyoming's Adult Education program will continue to participate with other core WIOA partners in building a career pathway model that includes the services offered by each partner. Title II Adult Education programs will also continue to identify and align with core partners in the areas of strategic vision/goals, analysis of economic conditions in the State, and in the analysis of workforce development activities as needed throughout the State.

Local adult education program directors will continue to meet with WIOA partners on a monthly basis to discuss referrals, develop relationships, and facilitate co-enrollment. Lastly, the State Director of Adult Education for Wyoming will continue to participate in monthly task force meetings to promote the collaboration and vision of workforce partners to ensure that a seamless system is implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

Local providers in Wyoming also participate in training offered through the LINC network, NASDAE (the

National Reporting System), and OCTAE sponsored trainings, such as the IET Design Camp and Teaching Skills that Matter.

**The establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of a State or outlying area, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.**

Given Wyoming's large geographic area, sparse population, and minimum funding levels, local Adult Education programs have historically found that providing quality professional development could be challenging because of the high cost of travel and time to attend any centralized trainings. The State has, therefore, designed a three-tiered approach to professional development. The first tier is local level training(s); the second tier is State-level training(s); and the third tier focuses on training(s) provided at the regional or national level. All levels of training are supported with State Leadership funds under section 223. The State level training is the Summer Institute; the State mandates that 80% of instructors from all local programs attend. The State generally chooses one or two specialized training options per year that can host additional teachers. In the past, this has included nationally-recognized trainings like the Adult Numeracy Institute, Teaching Skills that Matter, and the Align & Redesign (A & R) project. The Align & Redesign project will continue in the next few years as the State trains new instructors and directors on the principles and concepts associated with the A & R project.

Looking to the future, planned professional development trainings may continue to be offered virtually, given the limited funding streams available for professional development, on instructional topics and practices that will have the greatest impact for the greatest number of teachers across the state. To the extent feasible, the State will prioritize trainings using a model of sustained contact between trainers and a cohort of teachers throughout the year. This may include multiple virtual and/or in-person meetings, online discussion groups, and opportunities to try new practices in the classroom between meetings. The exact model of such trainings will depend on the needs and resources identified in the State each year.

More routine and required trainings (new teacher on-boarding, training on NRS data collection and data validation, LACES and CommunityPro database trainings) have been and will continue to be handled at the local level, in conjunction with State planning. This local level training is supported by the use of leadership dollars.

State leadership funds help to inaugurate the high-quality professional development needed to improve instruction in the essential components of reading as related to the specific needs of adult learners. Leadership activities in the components of reading are used to create the foundation for adults to develop complex reading skills as required for post-secondary education and/or for employment. Instruction in the essential components of reading is made available to all programs through various venues depending upon the needs of the individual program staff. The State will contract with reading experts to bring job-embedded professional development to the State as needed. Teachers will be required to participate in reading professional development that blends face-to-face learning and technology.

As resources permit, local programs can apply for 'special project' discretionary funds to support local professional development projects. Such projects should be aligned with local needs and supported with evidence. A local provider may determine through teacher evaluation and observation that training on the use of contextualized reading would help improve instructional quality at its outreach centers. The program would then create a training plan and request funds from the State to support this plan.

The overarching goal of Wyoming's professional development system for Adult Education is to provide Wyoming's adult educators with the skills and supports they need to be intellectually stimulated, have confidence in their abilities, and feel valued, all within a collegial atmosphere. A continual learning environment supports instructors, staff, and administrators in improving professional development and leadership skills that in turn maximize the potential for the success of the participants they serve. Each year, local programs survey staff to identify professional development needs. The results are used to plan

professional development training in the three-tiered system.

In FY 2020/21, the State completed a comprehensive redesign of professional development training for both new local directors and instructors new to Adult Education in Wyoming. These web-based trainings are now easily accessible to anyone from the Commission's website at:

<https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education/directors/#professdevelop>

**The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including—(i) the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training; (ii) the role of eligible providers as a One-Stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services, and**

**(i) assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.**

The part-time nature of the Wyoming Adult Education program will require technical assistance for all levels of staff on a continuous and progressive basis. Wyoming's Adult Education programs will offer training opportunities in such areas as rigorous and scientifically valid instructional practices and learning theories, participatory learning, assessment, academic and career advising, employability skills, digital literacy, contextualizing instruction, bridge programs, and college transition. Technical assistance is also planned in data collection/validation for the student data management system (LACES), electronic intake, monthly director's meetings, Statewide 'Meet & Greets' between Adult Education Directors and local Workforce Center Managers, Adult Education's participation in the Statewide Rapid Response System, opportunities to use braided funding streams for the expansion of AE services in Wyoming, as well as for the statewide referral system developed for WIOA core partners. Transition to post-secondary education and training programs will be a collaborative effort among the core partners and community partners.

The core partners are committed to cross-agency professional development efforts at both the state and local levels. Steps have been taken to ensure that staff at all agencies are informed of partner services and are able to make appropriate referrals as needed to ensure that full wrap-around services are provided to participants.

Local programs will continue to use multiple forms of technology (Google Classroom, Zoom, and Canvas) to instruct students in their programs and also for those adults who live in remote areas of the State. Technical assistance will be made available related to the use and instructional possibilities of such equipment and also in the development of effective online courses and fostering cultures for remote learning.

To provide comprehensive round-the-clock technical assistance, the State has completed an Adult Education Policy and Guidance Manual that was available to providers in October 2021. Local providers will be required to attend a two-day training where this electronic technical assistance manual will be discussed.

**The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.**

The State uses a variety of methods to monitor and evaluate the quality of local adult education programs and activities, including monthly desk audits, quarterly reports, data-quality monitoring, data validation, monthly fiscal reviews, annual program plans, and annual reports. The State conducts on-site or virtual monitoring visits to each local provider at least once every two years. More frequent monitoring visits may occur if risk assessment measures indicate a high risk for the local program, if 'Specific Conditions' as identified under Part 200, Subpart C §200.207 are implemented, or if circumstances arise with a local provider that the State deems places the program at high risk.

Monitoring will include a review of sixteen areas that covers all aspects of the program and its activities. The State has created a checklist for this monitoring review that covers the following topics:

- |                                    |                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Intake/orientation              | 9. Student files                          |
| 2. Student eligibility             | 10. Cooperative planning and partnerships |
| 3. Sufficient Intensity & Duration | 11. Facilities                            |
| 4. Educational & Career Counseling | 12. Data management                       |
| 5. Program personnel               | 13. Internal evaluation processes         |
| 6. Staff professional development  | 14. Fiscal review                         |
| 7. Assessment                      | 15. Reports                               |
| 8. WIOA System Network             | 16. GEPA-Section 427                      |

In preparation for this review, local programs must compile a notebook of evidence of compliance for each item shown on the State Compliance Checklist. Technical assistance is provided to programs whenever necessary to address findings and/or observations. Programs that are found to be out of compliance with State or Federal policies or law, or which have demonstrated unacceptable practices or consistently low performance will be subject to a Corrective Action Plan. “Consistently low performance” will be based upon actual program performance against program indicators, the extent to which state targets are met, past performance of the program, the relative performance of other providers, and other mitigating program circumstances. Programs that fail to implement a Corrective Action Plan as determined necessary by the State may be subject to the loss of grant funds.

Program data is reviewed monthly, with quarterly reviews occurring after data matches for employment and post-secondary are uploaded into the State’s Management Information System (LACES). The dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State will be carried out by the State through regular meetings with program directors and state conferences with instructional staff. Regular meetings with WIOA core partners also provide the opportunity for State inter-agency planning and help the State avoid duplicating efforts, maximizing the impact of activities delivered by each partnering agency.

## **2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE**

With limited funding to carry out the required activities, the Wyoming AE program has created a three-tier Professional Development Plan (PD) to share expenses and responsibilities with local programs. This allows a local AE program to use funds awarded to the program to purchase professional development services or “permissible activities.” The state will work closely with local providers to coordinate these efforts and evaluate these activities.

- (2) **PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES** — Each eligible agency may use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for one or more of the following adult education and literacy activities:
- (A) Supporting State or regional networks of literacy resource centers;
  - (B) Developing and implementing technology applications, translation, technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology;
  - (C) Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults;
  - (D) Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways (H. R. 803—192);
  - (E) Providing assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this Title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the State-adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3);
  - (F) Developing and implementing a system to assist in the transition from adult education to post-

secondary education, including linkages with post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education;

- (G) Integrating literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers;
- (H) Activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- (I) Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that:
  - (i) specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and
  - (ii) take into consideration the following:
    - (I) State adopted academic standards.
    - (II) The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State or outlying area.
    - (III) The primary indicators of performance described in section 116. Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State or outlying area.
    - (IV) Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State or outlying area.
- (J) Developing and piloting strategies for improving teacher quality and retention;
- (K) Developing and implementing programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically-valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels;
- (L) Outreach to instructors, students, and employers; and
- (M) Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

The three-tiered PD plan includes an explanation of types of PD for which the State will be responsible that defines the areas wherein the State and local programs may share the cost of PD, and establishes which elements the local programs are responsible for providing.

When funding is available, special projects will be funded to pilot or address the activities listed in Title II, Permissible Activities, that are applicable to Wyoming's programs. As guidance or training is provided by OCTAE, this information will be shared with local program directors via face-to-face meetings or electronically through webinars and emails.

## **A. ASSESSING QUALITY**

### **Assessment of Core Program**

AE program quality is viewed through two lenses. The first focuses on the elements of a quality program that lead to student outcomes. The second focuses on the delivery of instructional services to students, from recruitment and transition through post-secondary education to training or employment.

Standards and their indicators identify best practices for designing and managing an AE program. Best practices combine applied research findings, evidence-based practices, and professional wisdom. The quality of a program may be seen in the adoption and implementation of best practices that lead to the consistent delivery of high-quality services.

Standards of quality the WCCC will use are:

1. Program design and leadership;

2. Alignment of program and curricula to statewide initiatives, such as Next Generation Sector Partnership, Wyoming Works, Educational Initiative, and the Wyoming Governor's Mission and Vision for the State;
3. Capacity and sustainability;
4. Learner Career Services course intake and enrollment;
5. Assessments and meeting negotiated targets;
6. Goals and Career Pathways implementation;
7. Learner support and retention;
8. Referrals made and tracked on the LACES system;
9. Special learning needs and barriers to learning;
10. Contextualized and integrated curriculum;
11. Instruction aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards;
12. Learner records, data quality, data collection, and data validation;
13. Transition services;
14. Teacher quality and professional development tracked on LACES;
15. Teacher observation using Standards In Action and the Wyoming rubric;
16. Interactive partnerships with community and core partners (DVR and DWS programs); and
17. Participation in Next Generation Sector Partnerships.

WCCC state leadership activities will offer high-quality professional development programs to improve instruction aligned with local required adult education and family literacy activities. All AE program staff will be required to participate in 15 hours of professional development each year. This requirement includes 80% of the instructional staff attending the state-sponsored institute or other targeted institutes designed to improve performance. Every program must have staff members who are responsible for data entry attend data training. Training must be provided to volunteers or paid personnel for subject areas they are assisting with under the supervision of an instructor. All professional development completed by AE staff is tracked through the LACES database.

Instruction in the essential components of reading (text complexity, evidence of reading and writing in complex text, and use of non-fiction texts to increase knowledge) is a priority for AE providers. Mastering the reading components is a predictor of success in post-secondary education, training programs, and the workforce. Instruction in the rigors of mathematical concepts, reasoning, problem-solving, and strategic use of tools/equations to apply math in daily life and on the job is also offered. This instruction also pertains to the specific needs of adult learners in a contextualized approach, whenever possible.

Digital literacy and the use of technology will be integrated into classroom instruction, in professional development, and in relevant online forums. The State will disseminate information regarding models and promising practices related to the digital literacy needs of students and staff.

Annual AE program monitoring will include desktop reviews and site visits to ensure effectiveness in program improvement goals and the program's progress toward reaching negotiated state performance targets. Local providers are also expected to monitor performance through data dives to evaluate various components of the program. Career Pathway plans will be used to guide the development of new curricula and partnerships with core community partners in industry areas identified by local Next Generation Sector Partnerships. The plan will establish an integrated workflow among the partners and employers whenever possible.

Ongoing data analysis will be used for evidence of program quality. Monthly data reports, including self-evaluations of pre- to post-test gains, retention, pathways activities, and exit outcomes, will be sent to the State by each local provider. Quarterly narrative reports will describe successes and challenges of the local

program, support or barriers for performance, and opportunities to request technical assistance. The State will also review data for trends in problem areas to target State leadership training. All programs will continue to have data quality and analysis training from the State and the data management system LACES by LiteracyPro that will help to strengthen their programs.

Providers must supply performance measures of academic gain and outcomes each year. All providers not meeting end-of-year performance measures will be required to create a Corrective Action Plan and will be given technical assistance. If low performance continues for a second year, the provider will be in jeopardy of losing funds in subsequent years. When funds are not awarded to a prior local AE provider, the WCCC will release a Request for Proposals to secure a new provider.

The State will monitor student data to identify patterns in student transition to post-secondary education, employment, and credential attainment. Data workshops or online training on data analysis, data disaggregation, and data quality will be held at least semi-annually.

### **Assessment of Quality Professional Development**

WCCC – AE state office staff or an appointed designee will assess the quality of its professional development designed to improve:

1. Instruction in the essential components of reading instruction;
2. Instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners;
3. Instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel; and
4. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices.

To inform the assessment of the quality of professional development, AE turned to the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)'s research report "[How Teachers Change: A Study of Professional Development in Adult Education](#)" (2003), which gives four areas to consider in assessing the quality of professional development. Wyoming will use these in assessing professional development:

1. The content must be relevant to the program's short- and long-term stated goals. It must include well-defined objectives;
2. The content and processes must be student-outcomes focused (student learning at the center). The content must deepen and broaden the teachers' knowledge and skills in the subject/topic area. It must also demonstrate varied and effective styles of pedagogy and include summative and formative assessment to promote understanding;
3. The process has to be based on evidence for continuous improvement and is best when offered by subject-matter experts with a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the content themselves; and
4. The process has to have a maintenance infrastructure that incorporates strategies for part-time staff and addresses staff turnover.

Paper/pencil or online surveys will be used in the evaluation process. Any surveys conducted by the presenter/trainer will also be collected and reviewed for immediate feedback from the training recipients. In addition, an analysis of student data will be used to determine if the training had an impact on student outcomes and retention.

**Assessment of Partnership Career Pathways implies developing a system by the WIOA core partners and community partners that offer high-quality education and training which aligns to the skill needs of industry. The Next Generation Sector Partnerships model is a targeted way to initiate a Career Pathway planning process.**

Each local program will include continuous improvement plans and annual goals and describe how they are integrated into this model. Each local plan will include a description of transition support services and available scholarships that are open to AE students.



Continuous improvement goals will be reviewed at the beginning of the program year. Quarterly reports on goal achievement will be monitored. End-of-year goals performance will be assessed.

State and local AE providers will work with One-Stop partners to provide students access to education and training services.

### Assessment through trend reporting

Program report cards will provide local AE providers with results of the current year and two previous years. This will include average hours, enrollment, educational functional level gain, and transition to post-secondary education or training.

### ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan;	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

### ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that at least one eligible provider is serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under Title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under Title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

### AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	Wyoming Community College Commission
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	Enter information in this column
First Name	Dr. Ben
Last Name	Moritz
Title	Deputy Director

**SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)**

The 2020 Request for Proposals included the Section 427 requirement that each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) is to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to and participation in its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

Applicants were required to describe the steps to take to ensure equitable access to and equitable participation in the project or activity that would be conducted with federal adult education assistance. Their description addressed the access needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including the barriers highlighted in the Act.

Based on local circumstances, local programs determine whether these or other barriers may prevent participants from such access or participation in the federally-funded project or activity.

A request for enhanced GEPA information is included in the reapplication for continued funding to local programs. Reapplication requires a more detailed response that is consistent with program requirements, explaining the steps and citing examples of how the applicant plans to satisfy this provision for each of the barriers.

The AE state office will comply with GEPA. WCCC is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate in hiring practices for either employees or outside consultants. Before state leadership activities, including the State Institute and local directors' workshops/task force meetings, the State Program Manager will survey participants for special needs requests. In designing each event, equity concerns and the six types of barriers that can impede equitable access and participation will be considered for participants and trainers. Accommodations will be provided as requested, allowing equitable access to activities. The State Program Manager will ensure ease of accessibility to the venue.

The AE state office will monitor the local programs on their GEPA compliance during onsite visits.

[OMB Control No. 1894-0005 \(Exp. 04/30/2020\)](#)

**ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	45.0		45.5	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	43.5		44	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,000		\$3,250	
Credential Attainment Rate	41.5		41.5	
Measurable Skill Gains	48.0		48.5	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)****A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

- 1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides advice to and works in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The SRC plays a significant role in ensuring that the Vocational Rehabilitation

Program operates effectively and remains responsive to the needs of those served. The SRC works in partnership with DVR to develop policies, evaluate program effectiveness, and carry out other functions related to Wyoming's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The working relationship between the SRC and DVR is a partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services resulting in successful employment outcomes.

The SRC meets once a quarter at locations around the state of Wyoming to make participation possible for concerned citizens. These meetings are open to the public and held in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act.

The SRC has been particularly diligent in presenting awards at their quarterly meetings to local businesses that hire DVR consumers.

The SRC meets at least once a year in a joint session with the State Independent Living Council. Both groups find these meetings of value, as they provide an opportunity to discuss disability-related topics of mutual concern and to seek ways for each council to advance the goals and interests of disabled people throughout the State.

The SRC has received copies of all the Federal and State reports as they are submitted. At quarterly meetings, the DVR will continue to provide an informational "dashboard" and will continue to share how data on the dashboard impact DVR's ability to complete its mission.

In August 2019, the SRC provided DVR with recommendations of what to include in the 2020 VR portion of the State Plan. DVR implemented nearly all of these recommendations in the document. Those recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- Develop training opportunities for Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) and Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP) in rural areas of Wyoming to assist DVR in expanding recruitment efforts of Supported Employment providers to work in those rural areas;
- Update Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with partner agencies and Native American Tribes to reflect roles and responsibilities and determine collaborative strategies with DVR; and
- Increase Pre-Employment Training services and opportunities for underserved populations throughout Wyoming.

## **2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has provided valuable input into DVR's activities and policies. Input was specifically noted and accepted in the following areas; the need to update DVR MOUs with other state agencies, issues considered when developing annual goals for DVR, and State Plan goals/strategies. In August 2019, the SRC provided DVR with a 22-page document of recommendations on what to include in the 2020 VR portion of the State Plan. All recommendations provided by the 2019 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment were accepted and implemented into the VR portion of the State Plan.

## **3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.**

No recommendations were rejected.

### **1. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;**

DVR has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### **2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND**

DVR has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### **3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.**

DVR has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

## **A. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

### **1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is located within the Department of Workforce Services, which is the Workforce System agency in Wyoming. The cooperation between agencies is achieved through informal arrangements. All divisions within the agency are expected to:

- Provide comprehensive services designed to assist the unemployed citizens of the State of Wyoming in obtaining gainful employment;
- Support the underemployed citizens of the State in preparing for a new and more rewarding career;
- Provide the youth of Wyoming with a positive introduction to the world of work and subsequently provide follow-up and guidance to youth once they enter the workforce;
- Provide universal access to all customers, including those with special needs or barriers to employment;
- Provide customers with a choice in the services they access and how they access them based on individual need;
- Allow for integrated services through a planning process at state and local levels by coordinating activities and services for customers, and sharing information and client data; and
- Be fully aware of the role each partner has within the system and to understand the services each partner provides.

Other interagency cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are now carrying out activities through the Statewide Workforce Development System consist of:

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including, but not limited to:
  - Shoshone Tribal Business Council;
  - Northern Arapaho Business Council;
  - Business Enterprise Program;
  - Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services Program;
  - Division of Workers Compensation; and,
  - Organizations providing training services to DVR staff.

#### **Shoshone Tribal Business Council**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Business Council have a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place concerning rehabilitation services for Native Americans. DVR staff have offered to provide educational/training support to the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Business Council Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff. Eastern Shoshone staff have been invited to participate in the State Independent Living Council and DVR staff-training events. The DVR is working to update this MOU.

#### **Northern Arapaho Business Council**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Northern Arapaho Tribal Council have a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place concerning rehabilitation services for Native Americans. DVR staff have offered to provide educational/training support to the Northern Arapaho Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff. The Northern Arapaho staff have been invited to participate in the State Independent Living Council and DVR staff-training events. The DVR is working to update this MOU.

#### **Business Enterprise Program**

This program is responsible for administering vending-machine placement and services in State buildings and small businesses that may operate in State buildings. The program is a part of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and has an assigned program consultant who manages and oversees the program. This necessitates close working relationships with vending-service providers, building administrators, job coaches, community rehabilitation programs, and other government agencies.

The main objective of the Business Enterprise Program is to help individuals with disabilities plan and set up small businesses. Other entities are often involved in this process, including the U.S. Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Centers, the Wyoming Women's Business Center, the Wyoming Business Council, Social Security, private businesses, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and the Rocky Mountain Inventors and Entrepreneurs' Congress.

### **Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services Program**

The Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services Program coordinates and cooperates with numerous federal, state, and local agencies and programs to provide services to people with communication impairments.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Wyoming Legislature gave the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) administrative authority over the Wyoming Telecommunication Relay Service, also known as Wyoming Relay. The legislation established a special fee as the method of funding. DVR, through a competitive bid process, awarded a contract to a telecommunication service provider and oversees the contract. DVR also works cooperatively with the Federal Communications Commission, the Wyoming Public Service Commission, local exchange carriers, and radio common carriers to ensure that Wyoming Relay provides quality telecommunications relay service for conversations between people who use text telephones or other specialized telecommunications equipment and people who use the standard telephone network. Wyoming Relay meets or exceeds all operational, technical, and functional federal and state standards.

The legislation establishing Wyoming Relay also created a committee on telecommunications services for the communications impaired. The seven members of the committee are appointed by the Governor. DVR collaborates with this consumer-based committee to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of current services, to determine the need for new services, to develop marketing and outreach plans, to establish the rate of the special fee, and to determine equipment needs for the telecommunications equipment distribution program.

Wyoming Relay works cooperatively with DVR staff, phone companies, independent living centers, Wyoming Department of Education outreach consultants, special education teachers, consumer groups, assistive technology service providers, public health agencies, and senior citizen centers to provide information and training on obtaining and using specialized telecommunications equipment, including text telephones, amplified telephones, and telephone signaling devices for consumers with communication impairments. The training includes how to find and use interpreters. This training is also provided to individuals, students; businesses; organizations; and city, county, state, and federal agencies.

Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services has also developed a specialized training program and works cooperatively with local and state law enforcement agencies. Public safety dispatchers are trained to ensure 911 emergency access for callers using text telephones and captioned telephones. All peace officers who attend the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy receive training to ensure that they are providing accessible services to individuals with communication impairments. Over the past year, Wyoming Relay collaborated with Wyoming AARP, senior citizen centers, and high school services organizations to provide statewide training on using smartphones, tablets, and other telecommunication devices, accessibility features, and apps, including those apps for individuals with hearing loss or speech disabilities.

DVR works with the Wyoming Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (Registry) to ensure that all known interpreters in the state receive a form jointly developed by the DVR and Registry that serves as a tool for assessing the skill level of interpreters. The DVR collects the completed forms from interpreters, verifies interpreters' credentials, and then compiles the information interpreters choose to make public on a list of interpreters. This list is distributed to the general public, individuals, businesses, organizations, and

governmental agencies. Information on upcoming interpreter training opportunities is disseminated to all interpreters on the list.

Additionally, a Wyoming Relay/Deaf Services consultant is available to work with hearing-impaired students at the request of students, parents, school personnel, Wyoming Department of Education outreach consultants, or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors.

### **Division of Workers' Compensation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) continues to have an Agreement with the Workers' Compensation Division, which is also part of the Department of Workforce Services but not a Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) "partner." The purpose of the Agreement is to clarify procedures and responsibilities when an injured worker applies for the vocational rehabilitation option. (Refer to Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 27-14-408). A handbook for clients explaining DVR's processes is distributed to staff of both entities. A communication system to resolve client issues has been established and will continue.

### **Cooperation in training activities**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) routinely collaborates with other organizations to provide training opportunities for DVR staff, as well as for staff of other agencies. The following is a partial list of collaborating organizations:

- University of Wyoming
- Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR)
- Wyoming Institute for Disabilities
- Wyoming Department of Education
- Wyoming Department of Health
- Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Small Business Development Centers
- Wyoming Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery
- Community rehabilitation programs statewide
- Centers for Independent Living
- Protection and Advocacy, the Client Assistance Program
- Eastern Wyoming College
- Casper College
- Western Wyoming Community College
- Centrum for Disability Services
- National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
- Wyoming Department of Administration and Information
- Department of Workforce Services partners
- Laramie County Community College
- Assumption College
- University of Northern Colorado
- Utah State University
- Sheridan College
- Wyoming parent training and information centers Project Search.

DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding with the local Project Search site in Laramie, Wyoming. This agreement conveys responsibilities for the Project Search activities.

- Vocational Counseling Transition Services

DVR also collaborates with each individual Wyoming School District.

## **2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;**

### **Availability and Utilization of Assistive Technology**

The Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) makes assistive technology available to our Vocational Rehabilitation clients during each stage of the rehabilitation process. The primary provider of assistive technology (AT) in Wyoming is the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities. This provider provides AT assessments for DVR applicants and consumers, and DVR works with vendors that are in proximity with consumers to provide the needed AT.

## **3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;**

DVR does not have any agreements with the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## **4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND**

DVR's Program Consultants are working to identify all youth that may qualify for services. They reach out to the local school districts, the Wyoming Boys' and Girls' School, juvenile corrections and other entities, including mental health agencies that work with youth. Their outreach is intended to provide information to those individuals who may be eligible for services to let them know that the DVR may be able to help them secure training and employment. The DVR also collaborates with WIOA youth programs, as well as Adult Education. Division counselors conduct outreach to adjudicated youth, homeless youth, and youth in treatment facilities. At present, these outreach efforts have not resulted in establishing cooperative agreements, but the DVR is open to such agreements in the future if the need is determined.

## **5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.**

In Wyoming, the contracting process available to all state agencies is regulated through the Wyoming Administration and Information Procurement/Purchasing Office. The link describing the contract process is located at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1otUIXc6kEvNgkzJpglaKnPW2VfvtFFJA/view>.

DVR uses these contracts for staff purchases only. None of these contracts are used to purchase services for any VR consumer.

## **COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS**

### **1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS**

DVR continues to support state and local education agencies by being involved in community transition teams and related transition programs designed to address the needs of students who may become eligible for DVR services. Transition training is conducted at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

DVR plans to continue its support of training programs designed to ensure successful transition through partnerships with state and local education agencies and other community-based adult services. DVR anticipates state and local education agencies will see the benefit of participating in transition-focused partnerships to achieve compliance with new state and federal regulations. To assist with this, DVR has one program consultant who communicates with all 48 state and local education agencies to provide education and consultation services.

The program consultants participate in a transition-focused community of practice assembled by the University of Wyoming for the purpose of developing education policy recommendations and guidance for best practices to ensure successful transitions for Wyoming students. The transition consultants have provided training for students and parents in partnership with the Wyoming Parent Information Center. Specific training about Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-employment transition services has been provided to teachers and parents of students who are hearing impaired as well as to the Wyoming Independent Living (WIL) organization. Additionally, the transition consultants have established contact and provided training in all 48 school districts throughout the state. This is an ongoing effort by the DVR.

Under DVR policy, an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) is developed for students and youth with disabilities within 90 days of eligibility and before they leave school. DVR will provide pre-employment transition services for individuals 14–21, if transition planning is occurring. Transition referrals can be taken in person at the school by the VR counselor, or by phone or fax. Referral sources include self-referral, social workers, physicians, therapists, teachers, case managers, parents, and friends.

## **2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:**

### **A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;**

#### **(2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

DVR currently awaits final approval of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Education. This MOU outlines a collaborative framework that includes the responsibilities of each agency in coordinating state and local services and resources, as outlined in state and federal regulations and rules as they apply to students with disabilities in transition from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

#### **Definitions:**

a) **Student with a Disability**: An individual with a disability in a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education program who is between the ages of 14 and 21, is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; or is a student with a disability for purposes of Section 504.

b) **Youth with a Disability**: An individual with a disability who is not younger than 14 years old and is not older than 24 years old (more specifically, the client has not reached their 25th birthday).

In addition to the State-level MOU, cooperation between DVR and local educational agencies ensures that a transition team is established to develop and accomplish objectives and long-term goals. These teams meet for individualized education program development and scheduled planning sessions. The planning sessions, which include parents and consumers, determine the transition schedule from the school system to vocational rehabilitation to facilitate the completion of the individual education program and to develop the individual plan for employment of an eligible transition-age youth before that individual leaves the school setting. This process also includes students with disabilities who are not receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Community team members participating in the planning sessions may include youth case managers from WIOA, representatives from an Independent Living (IL) Agency, representatives from higher education or vocational programs, community rehabilitation service providers, and advocates. With a comprehensive transition team, the referral process is enhanced, outreach is improved, roles are more clearly defined, and transition services are coordinated. Assessments, consultations, and technical assistance are also provided to local education agencies and students. Individual meetings and community planning sessions allow DVR to help complete individual plans for employment for each student with a disability who is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves the school setting.



DVR works with local education agencies in identifying the 504 plan students to improve the referral process of students who have an individual education program. Such local agencies are encouraged to invite DVR to individual education program meetings as soon as transition planning occurs, but no later than the last individual education program before the student graduates or reaches the age of 21. As the transition consultant is able, efforts to improve the referral process will continue in all of the 48 local education agencies in Wyoming.

DVR currently has one Program Consultant who consults and coordinates with local, state, and federal education officials to improve the process for students in transition. The transition consultant is a resource for issues related to transition, provides training to staff, and provides a consistent statewide message from DVR to the local education agencies. The transition consultant actively educates DVR and education staff on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Their goal is to increase Pre-ETS referrals to better use the services provided and to target students who would benefit from a worker with DVR. The consultant is working on developing relationships, resource materials, training, and other needed services to educate and expand Pre-ETS.

DVR is currently providing Pre-ETS services on a fee-for-service basis. DVR worked to establish vendors and educate them on the services that fall under Pre-ETS. All five of the required Pre-ETS services are available statewide. DVR is looking into how it can provide services to this population under the ten authorized activities. Consultation and technical assistance to support educational agencies to plan for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services.

The MOU between DVR and the Wyoming Department of Education will identify each Agency's role and responsibilities, including:

- Consultation and technical assistance in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and school district personnel;
- Updating the roles and responsibilities of each Agency, including state-led agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services, to include information and training opportunities, and family/community awareness of resources;
- Financial responsibilities; and
- Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

**B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;**

The MOU between DVR and the Wyoming Department of Education will identify each Agency's role and responsibilities, including:

- Consultation and technical assistance in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and school district personnel;
- Updating the roles and responsibilities of each Agency, including state-led agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services, to include information and training opportunities and family/community awareness of resources;
- Financial responsibilities; and
- Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

**C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY,**

**INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;**

Provisions of the MOU between DVR and the Wyoming Department of Education include:

- Each Agency will invite the other to participate in training related to secondary transition, as appropriate. Each Agency shall designate a contact person to coordinate communication.
- Each Agency will be responsible for staff salaries and travel costs associated with executing the MOU. Other costs associated with training and technical assistance will be predetermined and agreed to in writing before the actual training event;
- The parties mutually agree to resolve disputes by meeting to confer and discuss any issues that may arise. Issues will be brought immediately to the attention of Agency personnel so issues can be resolved as expeditiously and informally as possible and at the lowest appropriate level. If Agency personnel cannot resolve a dispute, the dispute will be referred to the DVR Administrator and the Superintendent of Public Instruction for resolution;
- Both agencies will encourage local educational agencies and regional vocational rehabilitation offices to participate in local activities that create opportunities for students with disabilities to receive information on vocational rehabilitation services, eligibility, and application procedures. These outreach activities may include, but are not limited, to parent/teacher conferences, career fairs, or special projects targeted toward groups of students with disabilities who have been traditionally underserved through vocational/transition services. These include students at risk of dropping out, students receiving services through 504 plans, or groups of students identified as underserved through the annual analysis of statewide data;
- Both DVR and the Wyoming Department of Education will work to ensure that the appropriate party makes all financial payments. No transfer of funds will occur between the State Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the two agencies pay for their own initiated programs. Between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the local school districts, costs are negotiated based on the following:
  - The availability of Comparable Services and Benefits, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(8), must be determined by DVR unless such a determination would interrupt or delay the progress of the individual;
  - Under IDEA, 34 C.F.R. § 300.101, the public education system must ensure that FAPE is available to all students with disabilities; and
  - Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(c), nothing in this part will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring FAPE to children with disabilities within the State involved. The immediate counselor and the local school district will negotiate cost-sharing to provide the best services for the client in question.

The Wyoming Department of Education shall:

- Designate highly qualified educational personnel to be responsible for technical assistance, consultations, and the development of statewide program strategies and procedures applicable for youth with disabilities;
- Maintain membership/educational representation on the State Rehabilitation Council and other related councils, task forces, and committees;
- Ensure that local educational agencies implement the educational standards for Wyoming schools serving children with disabilities for transition services as specified by the Individuals with Disabilities Act;
- Ensure transition services are based on a student's individual educational needs as documented in the

student's individual education program;

- Establish appropriate, measurable post-secondary goals in training or education, employment, and independent living skills, and update annually;
- Plan and conduct age-appropriate vocational and/or transition assessments and, if appropriate, a functional vocational assessment no later than the year in which the student turns 16;
- Provide transition services in the individual education program that will reasonably enable the student to meet their post-secondary goals;
- Facilitate and coordinate the smooth transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school employment-related activities, including the receipt of appropriate Pre-ETS, transition services, technical education and competitive, integrated employment;
- Provide a course of study that will reasonably enable the student to meet their post-secondary goals;
- Provide instruction and related services that support a student's post-school goals and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills;
- Develop community and work experiences that provide opportunities for students to participate in skills development in community settings;
- Provide specific employment skills development through career and occupational skills training, employability skills development, work behaviors, and self-management skills acquisition, and support post-school adult living objectives;
- Establish linkages and facilitate communication with family, school, community agencies, and employers;
- Develop and implement a longitudinal tracking system for students with disabilities after K-12 departure; and
- Ensure that local education agencies obtain permission to invite outside service agencies and issue such invitations before the individual education program meeting at which transition services will be addressed.

Responsibilities of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) include:

- Coordinate with the Wyoming Department of Education, Special Programs Division, and local education agencies to develop and provide a system for a seamless transition from school to work/training for students with disabilities;
- Provide technical assistance, consultations, and develop statewide program strategies and procedures that are applicable to youth with disabilities. This includes providing consultations to assist in identifying eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities and assessing their individual needs for Pre-ETS;
- Provide technical assistance to Wyoming Department of Education personnel through formal and informal training, joint problem solving, and exchange of information on policies and procedures;
- Present at all available conferences, webinars, and training to educate department and local school district personnel about the availability of Pre-ETS services and how to access them;
- Participate in the annual data analysis performed each fall;
- Meet with local educational agencies special education directors, teachers, guidance counselors, and community service representatives to provide technical assistance and training about DVR programs, policies, and regulations as they apply to student transitions.
- Provide training on Pre-ETS and how the local educational agencies (LEAs) can assist students in accessing these services;
- Assign vocational rehabilitation counseling personnel to work with educational agencies in formalizing

collaborative efforts on student planning, referral development, and tracking;

- Make available relevant data about eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and tracking information about employment outcomes for students and youth with disabilities;
- Review agency data collection procedures to improve and track vocational rehabilitation services and employment outcomes;
- Assist local education agencies in planning for transitions of students with disabilities from school to post-school careers and life. The counselors shall act as consultants for students, parents, and the local education agencies during IEP/transition meetings scheduled before eligibility determination by DVR. When requested by the LEA, DVR shall ensure that DVR counselors/representatives participate in the evaluation process of students who have applied for or otherwise requested DVR services in the development of the IEP or 504 plan of eligible students;
- Provide the Wyoming Department of Education with data about students eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and tracking information about employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. This data will be exclusive of specific student identifiable information;
- Assign counselors to serve as liaisons to local educational agencies and to formalize a collaborative approach to student planning, referral development, and tracking. The aim is to facilitate the development of appropriate individual plans for employment for eligible students before the students leave high school. This assigned counselor can and will assist the LEA in making appropriate referrals for Pre-ETS services;
- Counsel former students who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and who are still eligible for DVR free appropriate public education to re-enroll in school for further study and training to enhance their prospects for employment;
- Coordinate with local educational agencies to provide vocational services (vocational assessments, career exploration, job shadowing, vocational guidance and rehabilitation counseling, and work experience) for students eligible for DVR services. DVR and such local agencies may negotiate the costs of vocationally related services before expenditures;
- Identify specific student groups with disabilities and in need of transition services, based on the annual statewide data analysis, which examines and targets areas of critical need, including groups of youth with disabilities who have been identified as underserved by both agencies. Outreach activities will be designed and refined annually based in part on this analysis;
- Distribute the brochure called “Transition Your Abilities” to better communicate the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, its eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services, and to disseminate the brochure to stakeholders; and
- Develop technical assistance presentations targeted to core stakeholders that address vocational rehabilitation services and requirements. Such stakeholders include students, parents, schools, and communities. Presentation venues could include career exploration days in schools, the Wyoming’s Developmental Disabilities Conference on Disabilities, and Wyoming Department of Education conferences targeting special educators.

DVR may be responsible for some vocational services that occur outside the school environment and are designed to prepare the student for post-secondary training or work.

DVR is not responsible for services not directly agreed upon during the development of the student’s individual education program and that are not included as a service on the student’s individual plan for employment.

#### **D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.**

DVR collaborates with Wyoming Department of Education Special Programs to provide Services for the

Visually Impaired (SVI) and special education assistance to students and adults with disabilities in several ways. For example, the Montgomery Trust (a private trust specifically earmarked for the visually impaired) can provide assistive technology equipment to both visually impaired young people and adults. DVR collaborates with SVI, Wyoming Independent Living (WIL), Wyoming Services for Independent Living (WSIL), and Centrum for Disability Services in providing services to clients.

DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Wyoming institutions of higher education. This MOU guides the planning and delivery of support services to individuals with disabilities who are clients of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and are students enrolled at Wyoming institutions of higher education, ensuring a seamless delivery system for overlapping services. These education institutions include the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's seven community colleges.

Provisions of the MOU include:

- DVR and institutions of higher education are not required to alter the policies that are different from each other for providing services or support;
- These education institutions are required to provide services and accommodations to DVR clients only to the same extent as they are provided to other students with disabilities;
- DVR is not prohibited from contracting with individual institutions of higher education to provide services or support for DVR clients beyond those required to ensure equal access to educational opportunities;
- Information exchange and joint training and referral procedures;
- The institutions of higher education will not require students with disabilities to apply for DVR funding before providing services or support. Nor will they deny or delay the provision of services or support while the DVR is determining the student's eligibility for services;
- In situations where a referral has been made to an institution of higher education for services, the appropriate institution staff may be involved in developing individual plans for employment;
- DVR counselors and higher education staff will respect an individual's right and responsibility to fully participate in all decisions regarding their vocational future;
- Definition of reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids;
- Guidelines for the provision of auxiliary aids. Among other things, funding sources for auxiliary aids will be determined on an individual, case-by-case basis depending on the setting and the individual's status as a student or DVR client. In the case of equipment, ownership will be determined;
- Additional guidelines for the provision of interpreter services; and
- Guidelines for the provision of different types of real-time captioning services.

#### **E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Because of the geographic challenges in Wyoming, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) recognizes that one of the best sources available for providing vocational rehabilitation services is Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP). CRPs consist of Community Support Providers, Mental Health Centers, Career Learning Centers, and Centers for Independent Living. These programs are located in and provide services throughout the state.

#### **Utilization, findings, and capacity of community rehabilitation programs**

During FFY2019, \$3,773,093 of DVRs client service expenditures were paid to CRPs. The following is a breakdown of the payments for client services made to CRPs and other Employment Specialist Providers during FFY2019:

- Private CRP – \$191,939 or 5.087%;

- Public Vendors – \$982,308 or 26.035%; and
- Private Vendors – \$2,598,846 or 68.878%.

The Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation makes extensive use of community rehabilitation programs, primarily to provide supported employment and related services. All regions of the state continue to be served to some degree by community rehabilitation programs operating under the State's developmental disabilities and behavioral health programs, or by independent organizations. Coverage is comprehensive for individuals with developmental disabilities, although a few agencies affiliated with the developmental disability system still do not provide extensively-supported employment opportunities. These gaps have been, to a degree, filled by independent non-profit or for-profit agencies and freelance job coaches.

#### **Manner in which cooperative arrangements are established.**

DVR does not maintain cooperative agreements with private, non-profit organizations. DVR maintains fee-for-service relationships with all community rehabilitation programs to provide job-development and job-coaching services. The fees are negotiated on a location-by-location basis, keeping in mind the rates being paid elsewhere in the state. Because of Wyoming's rural character, finding service providers can be challenging.

#### **Description of the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.**

In Wyoming, DVR is required to write a contract with any vendors involving \$5,000 or more. The process is dictated by the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information. This is only for contracted services and not for client services in which DVR pays a fee for service.

A draft Request for Proposal (RFP), including a list of potential proposers, is developed by DVR. The RFP must be approved by the Purchasing division of the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, which attaches all the required legal information, arranges for announcing the request for proposals, and receives sealed bids. The bids are scored by DVR staff, and the Purchasing Division notifies both successful and unsuccessful bidders. Contracts are negotiated by DVR staff and the proposer based on a set of requirements. The Wyoming Attorney General then reviews and approves the Contract before it is signed by the parties.

#### **Policies for the use of community rehabilitation programs**

The Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's use of CRPs continues to reflect a commitment to integrated, community-based employment.

DVR also maintains a policy that mental health centers from which DVR purchases services must be certified by the Wyoming Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health.

In the past year, DVR re-evaluated its past fee-for-service structure and investigated milestone payments and flat rates for certain services. As such, DVR established a revised fee-for-service structure to align rates across CRPs to integrate a benchmark system that overcomes past disparities in payment for provider services. This has created a foundation for rate payments across the state.

### **E. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The heart of supported employment is the coordination of the time-limited and ongoing support services. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is working collaboratively with service providers and public agencies to coordinate funding sources and policies. These efforts are categorized into two areas: Formal Cooperative Agreements and Informal Cooperative Efforts within Agencies.

**Formal Cooperative Arrangements.** DVR has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Health, Division of Healthcare Financing that addresses programmatic referrals, including extended supported employment services for each mutually eligible individual. DVR is actively working to update this MOU.

DVR does not have any other formal agreements with providers of supported employment services but would consider entering into any such agreements in the future. DVR provides services on a client-by-client basis and pays an appropriate market rate for the services provided. However, DVR recognizes that the goal of Wyoming's supported employment program is to increase community integration, individual independence, and productivity of persons with the most significant disabilities. In support of this goal, DVR is actively working to:

- Develop a comprehensive training program with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) in the areas of customized employment and supported employment;
- Continue cooperative efforts with school districts and other rehabilitation entities to enhance supported employment programs statewide, including the use of Transition Consultants and Independent Living Specialists;
- Encourage dedicated funding for long-term support needed by supported employment clients that include networking with the Division of Behavioral Health, Regional Service Providers in Wyoming, mental health centers, the Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, state and local education programs, Social Security employment incentives including Ticket To Work programs, training programs under WIOA, and private businesses; and
- Maintain the contact that was initiated with the Institute on Employment and Disability for guidance and technical assistance on Supported Employment and customized employment needs and training for community providers.

Geographic, programmatic, and disability-related gaps are still present in the capacities of community rehabilitation programs to provide the array of services that the DVR needs for clients with the most significant disabilities. These gaps include:

- Services to persons with acquired brain injuries;
- State-of-the-art employment services for persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses are more widely available now than at the time of previous needs assessments, but such services still are not available to all communities; and
- The potential for community rehabilitation programs to play a more substantial role in preparing students with disabilities for the transition from school to employment has not been reached, but collaboration with DD waiver services has enhanced services and abilities of the DVR to be more effective with supported employment efforts.

**Informal Cooperative arrangements with agencies.** DVR continually works collaboratively with its counterparts within the Department of Workforce Services on a day-to-day basis to better serve individuals with disabilities. The following are some of these efforts:

- 14 of the 16 DVR field offices are co-located with local Workforce Centers; and
- The DVR works closely with all partners identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to collaborate in continued efforts to implement the law. DVR staff members serve on agency workgroups, task forces, Workforce Development Council, and in some areas, local Next Gen Workforce Committees.

Currently, four CRPs provide Supported Employment Services to individuals with Most Significant Disabilities in the form of job coaching and exploration until DVR can help the consumer obtain waiver services provided by the Wyoming Division of Health Care Financing. DVR recognizes continued issues regarding the needs of individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment. As such, the DVR is actively working to:

- Continue to recruit Supported Employment providers to work in rural areas. This includes recruitment of individual service providers because of the lack of CRPs in rural areas;
- Recruit CRPs that are willing to apply for and become Employment Networks for the Social Security

Administration's Ticket to Work Program;

- Encourage parents and/or care providers to apply for Medicaid waiver services while their child is in high school;
- Implement a team approach to Supported Employment by emphasizing a culture of everyone succeeding together;
- Provide means for training in Individualized Placement Services (IPS) and Customized Employment (CE) to increase the DVR's ability to serve people with the most significant needs; and
- Develop cross-training across systems and providers on Supported Employment and specialized support to increase services and outcomes.

## **E. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS**

### **1. VR SERVICES; AND**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has been proactive in working collaboratively with employers. These initiatives consist of the following:

- The DVR is currently re-aligning the duties of the Employment First Consultant to the Program Consultants. The Program Consultants are responsible for coordinating meetings with employers, helping to facilitate internship placements at the state level through collaboration with the State Human Resources Division, and supporting the establishment of community employer groups that have hired individuals with disabilities. They will also contact businesses to learn about hiring needs, provide information about the DVR and its services, and offer support, ascertaining the potential for future job placements.
- **Business-Led Models:** One non-profit entity is available in Wyoming that is led by employers and offers support to the business community: The Uinta County Business Resource Network in Evanston, Wyoming. This entity has an approved MOU in place with the DVR to provide education consulting and technical assistance to businesses on hiring, accommodations, support, and retention when employing people with disabilities.
- **Business Organization Involvement:** DVR is working toward increasing memberships and regular involvement of staff within non-disability-related organizations in efforts to connect with employers. Such organizations include the local Chambers of Commerce, the Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and the National Employment Team (NET).

These opportunities allow for connecting with businesses to learn more about their workforce needs and identify any disability training needs they may have.

### **2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.**

DVR has three experienced counselors working as Program Consultants. In this role, they communicate with school counselors in every school district throughout the state to offer DVR services and develop work experiences for students and youth with disabilities with a priority on the five core Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which are:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.



The Program Consultants work with the Wyoming Department of Education, local school districts, and DVR staff to provide information about DVR services and help staff and eligible students with disabilities transition from school to the world of work. The consultants also help employer groups and others increase opportunities for work experiences and jobs for youth with disabilities. The Program Consultants are actively educating DVR staff, as well as education staff, on Pre-ETS. Their goal is to increase referrals to better use the services that fall in this area and to target students who would benefit from working with the DVR. The consultants are developing relationships, handouts, resource guides, training, and any other needed service to educate people on Pre-Employment Transition Services.

At the local level, DVR counselors work in the field offices to develop job sites that can support short-term work experiences for students and youth with disabilities. Wherever possible, the DVR partners with other groups and agencies, including Mental Health centers, Uinta County Business Leadership Network, Wyoming Independent Living, Community Rehabilitation Programs, and the local school districts. DVR is reaching out to Institutes for Higher Education and directly with employers across the state to identify additional opportunities for students and youth with disabilities. DVR is also working with various organizations to develop youth leadership opportunities to increase self-advocacy skills such as:

- The Pathways Program is a coordinated effort on the part of Fremont County school districts, the Wind River Casino, Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribal Councils, Wyoming Gaming Commission, and DVR to provide Pre-ETS services to eligible students in Fremont County;
- DVR has worked with Central Wyoming College in Riverton and developed an annual on-campus summer program to provide instruction and hands-on activities to eligible students. This multi-day event focuses on providing training in the five core Pre-ETS services;
- DVR and the Wyoming Boys' School have developed a program to provide Pre-ETS services to those children who are currently incarcerated at the facility. Classroom instruction includes independent living, return to their community, self-advocacy, and networking with other agencies they can use when they return to their respective communities;
- In Park County, DVR has partnered with Park County School Districts, the Museum of the West, and the Cody Recreation District to provide work experiences and other Pre-ETS required services to eligible students;
- Project Search is a national model partnering with a large employer, local school district, and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Wyoming currently has one Project Search Initiative in operation in Laramie;
- In Torrington, Blazer Pathway is an ongoing monthly program where employers from different industries come to Torrington HS and students engage with them to learn about various jobs;
- The Adulting 101 Pilot Program was provided by DVR at Torrington High School and in Yoder (one semester). Students learned basic adulting skills and how to prepare for a job. They also heard from different speakers in the community.
- In Cheyenne, the Johnson Junior High School Pilot Pathways Program was provided in coordination with DVR & Laramie County School District #1, based on requests from the Workforce Partnership Facilitator at LCSD#1. Students interacted with 22 employers, asked questions, and learned about specific jobs. Before the event, students completed a week of workshops that included resume building, interview skills, and dressing for success.
- The ongoing Zenith program at Laramie High School features career exploration, work experiences, and classroom career readiness. In Evanston, DVR is partnering with Uinta County School District to develop a summer program in which training with all students is provided before the students begin a work experience. The students learn about customer service, complete a CPR class, and any other training that the businesses recommend before the students begin their work experience. Additionally, collaboration has occurred to create a Students' Employment and Education Development Program

(SEED), which gathers a group of businesses interested in sponsoring work experiences;

- In Jackson, DVR is collaborating with Teton County School District on a regular basis to deliver age-appropriate transition lessons, including resume writing, mock interviews, job application processes, college applications, connecting with disability support services, and budgeting. DVR works with individual Pre-ETS students to set up internships and job placements to help students learn workplace skills. Individual instruction sometimes includes help applying for jobs, appropriately requesting time off, and giving notice. The DVR counselor also collaborates with the school district to provide students with access to summer work placements that lead to independent and competitive integrated employment;
- In Newcastle, an ongoing collaboration with the Department of Corrections serves transition-age individuals who are court-ordered to attend the Bootcamp. The extensive curriculum is taught by a Masters-level counselor. This project has been operating for more than three years;
- In Glenrock, the DVR Counselor has set up a workshop where students have the opportunity to interview employers from the community as well as larger national employers;
- In Gillette, the local DVR Counselor works closely with the youth homelessness project and provides Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities who are at the homeless shelter;
- In Hulett and Newcastle, DVR contracts with a vendor to teach the Skills to Pay the Bills curriculum that was developed by DOL to all potentially-eligible Pre-ETS students; and
- In Casper, an extensive program has been developed in collaboration with WBI, where staff and contract employees work with inpatient clients to teach curriculum on self-advocacy, understanding disabilities, and workplace readiness skills. The Casper office also partners with the employment and training program to present to the residents of YCC and adult learning centers; and
- In Rawlins, DVR collaborated with the Carbon County School District and a local CRP to create a Growing and Learning Opportunities that Work (GLOW) program that helps students with independence, employment, and community involvement.

## **E. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

### **1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has other formal and informal interagency arrangements and levels of cooperation.

**State Medicaid Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.** The Health Care Financing Division of the Wyoming Department of Health manages the Medicaid funds under this program.

In 1995, the DVR entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Division of Health Care Financing to increase collaboration between DVR and Division of Developmental Disabilities on behalf of mutually eligible clients. This MOU is used to increase the use of funding available to the State for the vocational rehabilitation of individuals with severe disabilities; to move individuals who are enrolled in Developmental Disabilities sponsored transitional training programs to supported employment and other suitable employment outcomes, and to expand the number of individuals with severe disabilities served by DVR. The MOU has not been updated since then, but the mission of the two divisions has not changed. Two divisions cooperate to best use DVR funds and funds from the Medicaid waiver services to maximize benefits to the clients and client ability to obtain and maintain employment. The two divisions work to make appropriate referrals to either program. When a mutual client is present, services and the appropriate funding source (DVR funds or Waiver funds) are coordinated and directed. The MOU also looks into the long-term support for the client to maintain employment and independence.

DVR also collaborates with the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. The DVR Administrator maintains an active membership role on this Council to provide insight into how DVR can assist individuals as well as to learn about ways the DVR can do more. DVR staff present and participate in training that the Council conducts. Council staff present at DVR's annual in-service training.

## **2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND**

In Wyoming, the State Agencies responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities are the Wyoming Department of Health Division of Healthcare Financing, and the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. DVR regularly collaborates with both entities. The DVR Administrator maintains an active membership role on the Council to provide insight into how DVR can assist individuals as well as how to improve partnerships. DVR staff also present and participate in training that the Council provides, and to reciprocate, the Council and Division of Healthcare Financing staff present at the DVR's annual in-service trainings.

## **3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.**

The Wyoming Department of Health Behavior Health Division is the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with mental illness. In September 2007, DVR completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Health Behavioral Health Division (formerly Mental Health Substance Abuse Services Division) to provide more effective services to people with disabilities, in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This effort includes increased collaboration in evaluating, planning, and implementing supported employment services for persons with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and transition-age youth. Joint biannual training focuses on these and other issues.

### **I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS**

#### **I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has implemented a number of strategies to ensure trained staff delivers quality services to applicants and consumers. Currently, one employee is primarily responsible for activities related to the comprehensive system of personnel development.

**Data system of Personnel and Personnel Development.** The current system to collect and analyze data related to qualified personnel needs and personnel development consists of the DVR Training Officer and the Department of Workforce Services, Human Resources Division, which maintains a database of all training activities attended by DVR staff, including training, seminars, workshops, conferences, and undergraduate and graduate-level courses supported by the DVR. The Human Resource Division maintains files on educational backgrounds and training activities. The Training Officer maintains goals and plans for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to meet the personnel standards to become qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and receive Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). Area Managers are required to address training needs as a part of the annual employee evaluation. Individual training needs are reported to the Training Officer to be considered in the implementation of results from the annual training needs assessment.

**Total Positions FFY 2020:** Seventeen administrative assistants (one per 276 clients), two Rehabilitation Coordinators (one office only) (one per 225 clients), 28 Counselors (one per 168 clients), four Regional Managers (one per 1175 clients).

The agency also has the following staff in the Administration office that supports the field staff: Six Consultants (Program, Small Business, Independent Living, and Wyoming Relay), five fiscal staff, one program analyst (case management system and SSA Reimbursement), one contract manager, one equipment distribution assistant (Wyoming Relay), and four administrators.

**Total: 69**

DVR currently monitors the workload of all staff and adjusts positions as needed to balance the workload and provide adequate services to clients.

Data from the case management system and input from the regional managers and administrators are reviewed quarterly. Recommendations are made for changes needed in staffing levels at the end of each federal fiscal year. DVR looks at historical data to develop a trend line to see if additional staff will be needed in the future and where to make recommendations for staffing levels to the Department of Workforce Services.

## **II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND**

### Current Vacancies:

Administrative Assistants – 4	Rehabilitation Coordinators – 2	VR Counselors – 0
Area Managers – 0	Program Consultants – 1	Contract Manager – 0
Equipment Distribution Manager – 0	Fiscal – 0	Administrators – 0

## **III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's comprehensive system of personnel development includes procedures and activities to ensure an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals. This system has four goals:

1. Identify current professional staff training needs and plan for skills and knowledge development of staff in one to five years from now;
2. Coordinate personnel development activities with the Wyoming Department of Education, as specified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
3. Coordinate a means to address training needs of current staff using institutions of higher education; and
4. Coordinate activities to ensure staff members are adequately trained and prepared to expand and improve services to clients.

The Division anticipates the need to recruit the following in the next five-year period:

- At least eight Qualified DVR counselors. This includes vacancies for four counselors who are eligible for retirement in the next five years, as well as estimated turnover;
- Six Administrative Assistant positions over the next five years. This includes vacancies for three Assistants who are eligible for retirement as well as estimated turnover;
- One Area Manager who is eligible for retirement;
- One Contract Manager who is eligible for retirement;
- One Program Consultant who is eligible for retirement;
- Rehabilitation Coordinators – 0;
- Program Analyst – 0;
- Equipment Distribution Manager – 0; and
- Administrators – 0.

## **B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

**I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;**

Wyoming does not have an institution of higher education that trains rehabilitation professionals. The three nearest such programs are at the University of Northern Colorado, Utah State University, and Montana State University. These programs concentrate on private and public rehabilitation, respectively. DVR also uses Assumption College as an optional location for distance education. All programs are certified by the Council on Rehabilitation Education.

**II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND**

A counselor becomes eligible to sit for the CRC exam when he/she successfully graduates from a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling program.

At present, four counselors are working on Master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling at Utah State University, three of whom are enrolled with RSA funds. Three more are attending the Masters in rehabilitation counseling program at Assumption College, one of whom is enrolled with RSA funds.

**THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.**

During FFY 2019, two students graduated from Utah State University with Master's Degrees from the Rehabilitation Counseling program. Both received RSA funding. One has successfully completed the certified rehabilitation counselor exam.

**2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL**

DVR recruits counselors from the University of Northern Colorado, Utah State University, Montana State University, and Assumption College whenever possible and has worked to improve communication with the schools to announce open positions and to recruit potential counselors. DVR has been posting current vacancy notices with the four schools.

Announcements for all state positions, including Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions, are posted on the State Personnel web page. Announcements are also made through ads in local and regional newspapers, with the Department of Workforce Services and Wyoming at Work. DVR, in accordance with the ADA, seeks to employ and advance qualified individuals with disabilities, as well as minorities.

Periodic announcements of staff position openings are sent via email from a listserv of Council of Rehabilitation Education graduate programs. DVR also maintains a listserv for smaller colleges in the area that have master's level programs in related fields.

DVR's comprehensive system of personnel development requires a counselor to have a master's degree and be eligible to take the certified rehabilitation counselor exam. DVR attempts to hire individuals who meet the personal development requirement, but if that is not possible, an attempt is made to hire someone with a related bachelor's degree and two years of experience. Such a new hire is made aware that at the end of his/her two-year probationary period, they will be expected to attend a Council of Rehabilitation Education accredited school to receive a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. They will have four years to complete the degree.

The following is a current breakdown of DVR staff members who meet or exceed the personal development requirements:

- 18 staff members in DVR have their certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) license;
- Ten DVR Counselors have their CRC licensure;
- Seven counselors are currently working in a master's degree program, or classes for Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) category R;

- Six counselors have completed their probationary period and are awaiting area manager approval or funding availability to enroll in a master's degree program; and
- Five counselors are currently in a probationary period and will begin working to meet the personnel development requirements at the appropriate time.

DVR actively updates and implements a system that addresses current and projected personnel training needs. DVR develops training plans for individuals using the State of Wyoming's Performance Management Initiative. This tool helps the agency establish and track goals for staff development.

The training officer tracks training needs of all employees and addresses those needs through annual in-service training for both counselors and assistants. DVR also sends individuals to training sessions provided by the State of Wyoming Personnel Division, numerous private or public vendors, CRCC University, and many webinars.

DVR has made a conscious effort to address retention and recruitment of staff by advocating for pay raises for all field professional and paraprofessional staff. The most recent pay raise for state employees occurred on July 1, 2019, which was a cost of living adjustment.

In December 2019, the Wyoming Attorney General's Office approved a new Education Contract that allows DVR to seek reimbursement of costs. If a counselor has received education funding through the DVR, the individual contractually agrees to continue employment with the DVR for two years after obtaining their master's degree. If employment is terminated before this time, repayment may include forfeiture of the final paycheck and any accrued annual or sick leave. This contract was implemented in February 2020.

### **Futures group**

The "futures group" is designed for staff members who are interested in moving into new or different roles within DVR and in developing the future direction of DVR. The current membership includes counselors, assistants, and program consultants. Membership is open to any permanent employee, with the approval of the supervisor and the DVR administrator. This group meets quarterly to provide input on business issues affecting DVR. They work directly with DVR program managers and may attend selected management team meetings to provide input. They also identify projects that may benefit the DVR. In 2019, the group created a VR101 training manual for new hires. The group also works to address many issues such as staff retention, continued policy development, case management system changes, and basic training systems.

## **2. PERSONNEL STANDARDS**

### **A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR – RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND**

The Wyoming Department of Administration and Information Division of Human Resources (DHR) is designated as the State Human Resource agency. Working in collaboration with DHR, DVR has established minimum standards for VR counselors, senior vocational rehabilitation counselors, transition consultants, and area managers. These standards are reviewed periodically in light of changing personnel needs, labor market supply, and training resources. DVR relies on State standards for administrative assistant, counselor aide, and program administrator positions, generic job classifications within the state Human Resources system. DVR has established specific knowledge, skills, and ability requirements for individuals to enter these positions.

Newly hired rehabilitation counselors must have a degree that will lead towards CRC certification. If they possess only a bachelor's degree, they must agree to pursue a master's degree as a condition of employment. Senior rehabilitation counselors are certified through the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor process. The priority in filling counselor vacancies is a master's degree and CRC certification. Eligibility for CRC certification (already possesses a master's degree but no certification) is the next preferred option. Mostly because of lower starting salaries compared to surrounding states, hiring individuals with bachelor's degrees for entry-level positions and requiring that they become qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors within four years is necessary. Based on this requirement, a VR Counselor hired in 2020 will meet the qualified VR counselor standards in 2026. DVR anticipates that all current VR Counselors will have their CRC certification by 10/1/2026.

**Standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:** Rehabilitation counselors are required to have a master's degree that will lead towards CRC certification or, if they possess only a bachelor's degree, each new hire must agree to pursue a master's degree as a condition of employment. DVR supports costs associated with pursuit of master's degrees. Funds for support of employees to obtain a master's degree consist of RSA stipends and program 110 funds. Once entry-level counselors have accomplished obtaining a master's degree and CRC certification, they can request a promotion to Senior Rehabilitation Counselor.

**Standards for Area Managers:** Currently, all Area Managers meet the requirements for a Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Area Managers must have experience in working with people with disabilities, knowledge of the vocational rehabilitation program, and must have the ability to manage a budget, personnel and office operations, and have the credentials of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC).

**B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

DVR is committed to hiring qualified rehabilitation staff beyond the current minimum standards established by the State of Wyoming Personnel Division. An individual must have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or another master's degree that would allow the person to meet national certified rehabilitation counselor requirements. DVR seeks candidates with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, counseling, social work, sociology, psychology, or other related fields.

The State of Wyoming does not have a licensing standard for rehabilitation counseling or for a rehabilitation counselor. The DVR standard requires a person have a master's degree and to be eligible to sit for the certified rehabilitation counselor exam. The State Human Resource Division has set a master's degree (typically in social services or related field) as a minimum qualification, and up to three years of progressive work experience (typically in vocational rehabilitation), or a related bachelor's degree and four to six years of progressive work experience (typically in vocational rehabilitation). Preference is given to potential employees with a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRC).

Because of difficulties in recruiting and hiring qualified rehabilitation professionals, when faced with no other alternative, DVR does hire individuals with a bachelor's degree in a related field with a minimum of two years of relevant work experience. (Note: This is the State of Wyoming's personnel standard). In so doing, the new hire is advised of DVR's expectations as they pertain to personnel standards and is offered the position only with the person's agreement to pursue a master's degree.

Based on standards developed through the personnel system, each staff member participates in the annual Performance Management Initiative (PMI) that analyzes job performance and identifies training needs. DVR continues to do annual training needs assessments of all staff, tracks training needs, and links individuals to appropriate training. Training needs to be addressed at the Statewide in-service training are determined by polling DVR staff.

DVR will assess counselor training needs on an individual basis to ensure compliance with personnel standards. Department of Workforce Services Human Resources Division maintains individual counselor records that identify training needs, training received, and anticipated target dates for completion of education programs.

Priority of training includes completion timeframes as follows:

1. Individuals with bachelor's degree > master's rehabilitation – three to five years
2. Related master's degree > certified rehabilitation counselor – one to three years

Training progress for counselors is monitored and tracked annually. Staff must have an updated understanding of the evolving labor force and emerging knowledge included in regional and statewide in-service training. DVR also consults with its liaison from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to ensure that subject matter is relevant.

DVR's personnel development system attempts to create qualified rehabilitation counselors through a distance-learning grant at Utah State University and other universities. Staff members without master's degrees must take the Utah State University or other distance learning programs with financial assistance from the agency. The following details the qualifications of current field staff:

- Of 28 counselors, ten have certified rehabilitation counselor credentials; seven are working in a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling program (MRC) without such credentials; six have completed their probationary period and are awaiting to enroll in an MRC program; five counselors have a bachelor's degree and are in their probationary period.
- Of 11 administration staff (including four area managers and the transition consultants), eight have certified rehabilitation counselor credentials.
- Of the counselors and consultants having master's degrees in areas other than vocational rehabilitation counseling, all have been advised and encouraged to acquire the designation of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor in accordance with methods offered by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

Each counselor or consultant keeps a record of progress toward the meeting agency standard.

#### **4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

##### **A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) approaches personnel development through a number of avenues. Each employee's current level of education and training and short- and long-term training needs are tracked by area managers who evaluate methods for addressing these needs annually through the Performance Management Initiative (PMI) review system. Individual training needs assessments are conducted with the Training Officer to evaluate current levels of education, understanding of fundamentals of vocational rehabilitation, disability-related issues, professional development, and related topics. Self-evaluation and supervisor input and recommendation sections are completed through the State Personnel Division. DVR maintains a training budget administered by the Department's Fiscal Division to better control training funds and focus funds on targeted areas.

All staff members participate in annual in-service training. Two in-service training sessions are scheduled annually, one for counselors, managers, and consultants, and one for support staff. The topics arise from staff needs and issues identified in quality-assurance reviews and are specific to vocational rehabilitation subject matter. A wide variety of training has been made available to counselors and consultants. DVR has a philosophy of training support staff in a manner similar to counseling staff to ensure consistency. However, many training topics for counselors are to help those who have CRCs obtain continuing education credit to maintain their license. Training has been provided by the DVR, Social Security Administration, and numerous private vendors.

Training topics offered at the 2019 staff in-service included personality disorders, Social Security Work Incentives, expedited enrollment, fiscal processes, and methods of self-care. Regional in-services are held each year to enhance training opportunities for all staff.

Cooperation with WIOA partners within DWS and other entities in state government (including the Department of Health and the Wyoming Department of Education) ensures that training opportunities are available that address topics relevant to the field of rehabilitation. Staff members have access to intensive training that applies to serving individuals with disabilities. These conferences and/or seminars are also an opportunity to collaborate with other entities that deliver services to individuals with disabilities. DVR staff also regularly provides training to WIOA partners that addresses considerations related to working with individuals with disabilities.



Administrative Assistants are offered ongoing training in word processing, other software applications, and office-related courses, including effective writing, organization skills, and working with difficult clients.

The DVR regularly collaborates with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) program to provide Assistive Technology (AT) assessments for consumers and training and technical assistance for DVR staff.

#### **B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.**

The DVR's Central Office has a lending library that contains reference materials relevant to vocational rehabilitation counseling. Reference materials are often requested by field staff or area managers and may be purchased for their use. In-service speakers and trainers often provide research information, as do many conference presenters. Training for personnel is delivered through workshops, conferences, video conferencing, and webinars. DVR also uses e-mail and web links to disseminate information on research, studies, and other relevant information related to disabilities and vocational rehabilitation.

**Performance Management Initiative (PMI).** DVR must adhere to the State of Wyoming personnel rules, which include a performance appraisal system. The PMI requires area manager reviews twice a year with each employee. Such reviews can lead to improved performance through an analysis of strengths and weaknesses and identification of training issues.

The quality assurance/improvement consultant reviews case files on a quarterly basis with a standard protocol. The consultant reports findings to the DVR administrator, who then works with the training officer to recommend training to correct deficiencies. The consultant also notes practices that are working well. If system-wide issues are found, policies are reviewed and changed if necessary, or staff members are given additional training to understand policy changes or to comply with the policy.

**Affirmative action.** DVR ensures that affirmative action is considered when employing and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities and minorities in employment. Thirteen percent of DVR staff members have reported disabilities. The State Personnel Division follows affirmative action requirements and ensures that DVR maintains appropriate hiring procedures.

#### **4. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

The DVR has established and maintains minimum standards to ensure that some available staff members are trained to communicate in the native languages or modes of communication of clients. The DVR does not specifically recruit people based on their ability to provide services in a particular language.

The DVR handbook is available in Spanish. As the occasion warrants, interpreters are hired to effectively communicate with clients who use other languages. Several staff members have sign-language skills, and DVR helps them maintain and improve such skills. A program consultant who specializes in services for the deaf and hard of hearing is available. Essentials such as orientation to DVR and eligibility requirements are on tape or in large print for people who are blind/visually impaired. Additional needs for people who are blind/visually impaired are met by purchasing services or from the Wyoming Department of Education, Services for the Visually Impaired.

DVR makes use of interpreters by telephone or video conference if needed and also provides assistive listening devices and augmentative alternative communication devices if needed.

#### **4. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) establishes reciprocal referral services, outlines appropriate uses of each department's facilities and services, and describes joint-planning activities to improve services for people with disabilities.

This MOU strengthens the transition process and the availability of Assistive Technology (AT) to VR clients who are in school. This agreement specifies joint training on AT, IDEA, and other pertinent legislation.

Whenever possible, the two departments and local education agencies coordinate transition training sessions. Topics already addressed or being considered include career counseling, job placement, success in higher education, and use of disability resource centers. DVR staff members participate regularly or act as presenters in as many training sessions as possible.

Staff members of the two departments currently hold regular monthly meetings. DVR program consultants also meet regularly with the WDE staff. Where possible, local DVR counselors and managers meet with staff of WDE and local school districts agencies to collaborate and share information.

**J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:**

**A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;**

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1998, requires each state to conduct a needs assessment every three years, to identify and understand the needs of individuals with disabilities in the state, and to use the information to make appropriate operational and programmatic adjustments that ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services to such individuals.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a statewide comprehensive needs assessment every three years. The most recent began in 2018 and was completed in April 2019.

The 2018 effort was a statewide assessment conducted jointly by the DVR and the State Rehabilitation Council. Public vocational rehabilitation has collaborated with their WIOA program partners in this assessment and the subsequent planning process to ensure that the workforce needs of the state to include individuals with disabilities were addressed.

**2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.** The following themes repeatedly emerged from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

- Transportation was the most commonly-cited rehabilitation need for individuals with disabilities, especially those with the most significant disabilities. The state's rural nature limits public transportation options, and the inability of people to get to training and work adversely affects employment opportunities. This is true for all populations served or potentially served by DVR;
- Supported Employment (SE) is a necessary service for people with the most significant disabilities and needs, including severe and persistent mental illness. Wyoming has providers who specialize in these services only in larger communities;
- Multiple staff and partners indicate that DVR is serving a growing number of individuals with mental health impairments and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Staff and partners expressed a need to receive ongoing training in how to effectively work with these populations;
- Rural areas have no access to SE services, except in the rare cases where a local individual service provider has experience in SE;
- Individualized Placement Services (IPS) and Customized Employment (CE) need capacity-building and training to build short- and long-term support for people with the most significant disabilities;
- Although a few service providers have been trained in customized employment, DVR has no separate rate structure for this service, which prevents CE from being provided in its purest form. Parts of CE can be provided to consumers, but this occurs as part of supported employment services that are somewhat individualized as opposed to traditional customized employment;
- Collaboration across systems serving individuals with the most significant disabilities was generally

characterized as an area that can be improved;

- DVR, the Wyoming Department of Health's Health Care Financing Division (the Medicaid Waiver Program), and Behavioral Health Division need to coordinate services to ensure that the gaps in service delivery are adequately addressed. This is especially important when funding cuts, staff turnover, or other impacts on one or more of the agencies affects Wyoming's ability to meet the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities;
- Wyoming is an Employment First State and has in effect eliminated subminimum wage employment throughout the State. Although no legal prohibition exists against paying subminimum wages, DVR has strongly advocated for competitive integrated employment (CIE), as have other agencies; this has eliminated subminimum wage employment in the State;
- Multiple staff and partners indicate that a large percentage of individuals they worked with received either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These beneficiaries often had to go through a very long and arduous process to become eligible for benefits. This process can take more than two years and includes multiple appeals of eligibility denial. Consequently, these individuals are very fearful that working will result in benefit loss, so they seek work at a part-time level to augment benefits, rather than striving for self-sufficiency through work;
- The waiting list for Medicaid waiver services was consistently reported as very long, exceeding two years in many cases. DVR serves a large number of individuals with ID/DD, so the waitlist adversely affects extended services for SE for this population; and
- The mental health service system in Wyoming was described as impacted in the State's rural areas, with access to psychiatrists described as non-existent.

**Response Statement:** DVR, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, will work to:

- Continue to recruit SE providers to work in rural areas. This will likely need to include recruitment of individual service providers because of the lack of community rehabilitation programs in the rural areas of the State;
- Encourage parents and/or care providers to apply for Medicaid waiver services while their child is in high school;
- Recruit Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) that are willing to apply for and become Employment Networks for the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program so that they can use these ENs for extended service provision for individuals that require the SE service model but do not qualify for the Medicaid Waiver program;
- Consider implementing a team approach to Supported Employment, emphasizing the culture of everyone succeeding together;
- Engage in cross-training across systems and providers on SE and specialized supports to increase services and outcomes;
- Provide means for training in IPS and CE to increase DVR's ability to serve people with the most significant needs;
- Consider funding CE training and development to increase the number of individuals who could benefit in terms of an employment outcome and the number of qualified providers willing to offer customized employment services;
- Share expertise and resources with recovery programs and provide training to counselors and providers on ways to help consumers address the multiple dimensions of recovery; and
- Augment benefit planning services with training for staff and providers on strategies that contribute to the pursuit of work above the level of SGA, including self-sufficiency for SSA beneficiaries.

**B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;**

The prevalence of disability among ethnic categories distinguished by working age (18–64 years) for the State is listed in the table below. (Note: Data is taken from five-year US Census estimates as data was not available for all races in one-year estimates). DVR data is taken from its case management system.

**Disability Status + Age (18 – 64 years) + Race**

Race	Number of WAWD in WY	Percent of Total	Number in DVR	Percent of Total	Difference
All	41,294	100.0%	NA	NA	NA
White	34,355	83.2%	1624	85.5%	2.3%
Black/African	480	1.2%	49	2.6%	1.4%
Hispanic/Latino	3,343	8.1%	164	8.6%	0.5%
Am Indian & Alaskan Native	1,125	2.7%	51	2.7%	0.0%
Asian	246	0.6%	6	0.3%	-0.3%
Native Haw. Or Pac Islander	16	0.0%	6	0.3%	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;**

The following themes repeatedly emerged in terms of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who were potentially unserved or underserved by DVR:

- The far rural areas of Wyoming were identified as underserved because individuals with disabilities in these areas do not have access to transportation to get to DVR satellite offices;
- Hispanics were cited most frequently as a potentially underserved population. This was generally associated with a mistrust of the government and a tendency to rely on family to take care of individuals with disabilities in the community;
- Youth who are served by foster care or that have been involved with juvenile justice were described as potentially underserved;
- The last several years have shown an increase in the Somali refugee population in the Southeast portion of the state; this group was cited as potentially underserved because of language barriers and undocumented status;
- Two Native American Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs operate in Wyoming, the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone VR programs. Of these two Tribal VR programs, DVR works most closely with the Northern Arapaho program. Considerable room for growth is possible in the relationship as it relates to the co-enrollment of consumers and shared services. This occurs with the Northern Arapaho program but is non-existent with the Eastern Shoshone; and
- Multiple staff and partners indicated that low levels of incidents of individuals with blindness or deafness are served by DVR. These low levels are a result of simply no need for VR services by these groups, a low level of occurrence in the general population, or some other factors.

**Response Statement:** DVR, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, will work to:

- Investigate the use of distance technologies and videoconferencing software programs to facilitate access and delivery of services to individuals in the rural areas of the State;
- Conduct outreach to Hispanic community groups and cultivate relationships with them to encourage referrals. The DVR staff will work to develop a plan to meet Hispanic individuals in their communities to conduct intake interviews rather than requiring these individuals to come to the DVR office to apply for services;
- Attempt to recruit and hire bilingual staff whenever possible, including staff that can function in American Sign Language;

- Examine outreach strategies to individuals who are blind and deaf in Wyoming to increase the rate of service delivery to these individuals;
- Attempt to work collaboratively with the Tribal VR programs to increase the incidence of shared cases between the programs; and
- Consult with the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) to determine if strategies can be employed to increase outreach and service to out-of-school youth with disabilities.

**D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND**

The 2018 CSNA showed the following data from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

**Wyoming's Workforce Training and Employment**

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the Center to get training?	11	15.9%	58	84.1%	69
Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	6	54.6%	5	45.5%	11
Did the training result in employment?	3	30.0%	7	70.0%	10
Did you go to the Workforce Center to find a job?	51	76.1%	16	23.9%	67
Did they help you find employment?	17	32.1%	36	67.9%	53

Analysis of responses indicated the services respondents received at the Workforce Training Centers did not result in desired outcomes for many. 15.9% of respondents went to the Workforce Center to get training, and slightly more than half indicated that they received the training they were seeking, but only three found work as a result of the training. There were 76.1% out of 67 individuals who went to the Workforce Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Of that total number, only 3.2% actually found employment as a result of the help provided by the Workforce Center.

Additionally, the CSNA made the following findings:

- The relationship between DVR and the Title I and III programs was described as positively developing and much improved in the last two years. Co-enrollment and braiding of funding are occurring on a regular basis;
- Co-location of DVR and Workforce staff provides a good environment for a seamless transition of services from one program to the other. This encourages co-enrollment and joint planning;
- DVR and the other core partners collaborate in putting on job fairs, which benefits the consumers of all of the programs;
- DVR and the other core partners are developing an intake form that will contribute to co-enrollment;
- At the leadership level, quarterly and annual meetings appear to be making a positive impact in WIOA implementation across core partners; and
- The relationship between DVR staff and the other core partners was consistently described as positive at the field level, but uneven in the depth of partnerships as it relates to shared funding of cases or joint planning. In several areas, the relationship is primarily one of referral, but joint planning and funding occurred in several instances.

**Response Statement:** DVR, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, will work to:

- Develop cross-training with DVR and Workforce Center staff to increase understanding of each agency's role, responsibilities, and services for participants (including those for participants with the most significant disabilities). DVR should provide disability awareness and sensitivity training to Workforce Center staff on a regular basis to help increase the capacity of the Workforce Center's staff in effectively working with job seekers with disabilities and, if the training is provided regularly, helping to address the loss of capacity posed by staff turnover at the Workforce Centers;
- Identify examples of effective partnerships with the Workforce Centers across the State and use these as examples for training and replication in other areas;
- Consider piloting the use of Partnership Plus in a few Workforce Centers across the State to help ensure that they are positively addressing the need for extended services for SSA beneficiaries who are served by the Workforce Centers; and
- Partner with select Workforce Centers to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in Apprenticeship programs.
- Continue to improve capacity to track co-enrollment of consumers and share that information on a regular basis among DVR and partners.

**E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.**

The 2018 CSNA examined educational attainment rates, unemployment rates, and Labor force participation rates for youth in Wyoming. The following was determined:

**Educational Attainment for Ages 18 – 24 Years**

Area	Less than High School Graduate	HS Grad (includes equivalency)	Some college, or Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree
<b>*US</b>	13.1%	31.0%	45.1%	10.8%
<b>*WY</b>	15.9%	32.4%	45.0%	6.7%

*\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates*

**2016 Employment by Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Youth Ages 16 – 20**

Disability Type	US Percent Employed	Wyoming Percent Employed
Any Disability	24.8%	27.2%
Visual Disability	31.0%	No Data Available
Hearing Disability	32.3%	5.6%
Ambulatory Disability	20.5%	1.9%
Cognitive Disability	21.3%	18.5%
Self-Care Disability	9.2%	No Data Available
Independent Living Disability	11.9%	13.1%

*Source: <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/>*

The data indicate that Wyoming's employment rate for youth with disabilities exceeds the national average by 2.4 percent. Youth with cognitive disabilities are employed slightly below the national average in Wyoming, but youth with independent living disabilities are employed slightly above the national average.

**Youth Labor Force Participation**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on youth labor force participation and unemployment. The following provides national data for youth ages 16–19 and 20–24 with and without disabilities.

## Labor Force Participation Rates for Youth

Age	18-May		18-Jun	
	Labor Force Participation Rate		Labor Force Participation Rate	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16–19	22.6%	34.5%	25.8%	42.1%
Age 20–24	40.5%	72.1%	40.6%	75.2%
	Unemployment Rate		Unemployment Rate	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16–19	28.9%	12.5%	22.9%	14.7%
Age 20–24	10.7%	6.9%	13.1%	8.0%

*\* Generated using unpublished data obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Table 1. Labor force status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, age, and disability status, May 2018 and June 2018 (Source: Current Population Survey).*

The data indicate that in all indicators of employment nationally, youth with disabilities perform far below their peers without disabilities. This data reinforces the need to provide youth with disabilities every opportunity to participate in work experiences and learn what is required in the world of work. The provision of pre-employment transition services represents an important first opportunity to reach students with disabilities in Wyoming and across the nation.

The data also indicate that the employment rate for youth with disabilities in Wyoming exceeds the national average by 2.4%. Youth with cognitive disabilities are employed slightly below the national average in Wyoming, but youth with independent living disabilities are employed slightly above the national average.

DVR is committed to providing more Pre-ETS services and outreach to rural communities. The DVR collaborates with the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities to promote Employment First and will continue to work with WIOA partners to increase services to students and youth with disabilities.

### 1. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The 2018 CSNA data furnished evidence that additional resources are needed to serve DVR clients through the provider world (Community Rehabilitation Programs). The data indicates that changes are needed in the provider service configuration to continue to effectively serve a wide and diverse range of needs of clients on the DVR caseload. The needs relate to specific training topics for providers and a greater variety of job placement options across Wyoming communities. The primary needs identified that relate to Wyoming Community Rehabilitation Programs were:

- The rate structure for payment of VR services was reported to be negotiated with each service provider rather than based on an approved cost statement or being set as a flat rate. This results in different levels of payment to different providers for the same service;
- CRPs are difficult to access and, in some cases, non-existent in rural Wyoming. This causes difficulty in placement and necessary support for many in the State who need employment services, including supported employment;
- A lack of training or credentialing requirements affects providers;
- Funding issues and lack of referrals have created limitations in CRPs' ability to maintain staff and place clients in a timely manner;
- The turnover rate in CRPs results in a lack of continuity in service delivery and inconsistent quality of services;
- CRPs need training in various disability types to provide services to a wider range of clients;

- Fiscal processes have made an extreme impact on CRPs. Timelines and expectations for billing are inconsistent, untimely, and sometimes unpaid altogether;
- Core Team Meetings are a positive practice, but little consistency occurs with counselors who provide documentation or assessments to CRPs at the time of referral; and
- No payment options are available for a CRP assessment to get to know the client before job searching.

**Response Statement:** DVR, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, will work to:

- Establish minimum expectations for service provider experience or certification that will help ensure quality service delivery to consumers receiving employment services or other VR services;
- Create a guidebook for CRPs that includes rates and fees, processes, training opportunities and expectations, collaboration, and definitions for service provisions;
- Include CRPs and individual service providers in the trainings provided for DVR staff;
- Meet with existing CRPs to determine if any available strategies or incentives would help the CRPs expand services in the rural areas of the State;
- Effective October 1, 2021, implement a fee-for-service structure to align rates across CRPs, integrate a milestone benchmark system, and overcome some of the current disparities in payment for provider services was implemented; and
- Add feedback questions related to CRPs and job coach services to the satisfaction surveys sent to DVR consumers.

## **2. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE**

### **EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

To determine if a VR agency can move from the five required services to the nine authorized services, a fiscal forecasting model must be used that identifies the expenditures on the required services and on coordination activities, then forecasts how much of the remaining funds, if any, can be used to pay for authorized services. The CSNA recommends that DVR complete this model, as developed by RSA and the VRTAC-QM.

#### **Pre-ETS Services Provided by DVR as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of Program Year 2018**

<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Number of Services Provided</b>	<b>Percent of all Pre-ETS Services</b>
Job Exploration Counseling	362	23.7%
Counseling and Enrollment Opportunities for PSE	219	14.1%
Work-Based Learning Experiences	343	22.5%
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	200	13.1%
Work Readiness Training	401	26.3%

The data indicate that DVR has provided work-readiness training most frequently, followed closely by job exploration and work-based learning experiences. Instruction in self-advocacy was provided the fewest number of times.

The following recurring themes emerged that relate to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

- DVRs youth population was noted as increasing consistently as a result of the changes in WIOA and the delivery of pre-employment transition services (PRE-ETS) across the State;
- All five of the required pre-employment transition services were identified as a need for students with disabilities throughout Wyoming. DVR initially struggled with implementing Pre-ETS services but has



developed contracts to provide the five required pre-employment transition services and does not expect to have to return funds in FFY 2021;

- Although all of the five required Pre-ETS services are needed and beneficial, work-based learning experiences were frequently cited as the most valuable and needed Pre-ETS service;
- VR Counselors are striving to build relationships and access students in the schools. Suggestions were made to have designated caseloads for transition rather than all counselors. Some believe the focus on youth has taken away time and services from adults; a corresponding belief is that dedicated caseloads would level the support;
- The need for financial literacy training was noted by several participants for youth and students with disabilities. Staff and partners are concerned that the young people they work with can be taken advantage of since they do not know how to manage their money, or in some cases, understand the value of money;
- DVR has difficulty accessing students in 504 plans who are not identified as having a disability in school. Many students who could access pre-employment transition services are missed because no reliable data is available on who and where they are;
- Pre-ETS Services are making a positive impact, and people understand the value; however, confusion with DVR and the partners occurs regarding definitions, expectations, and allowable services;
- The development of soft skills was identified as a major need for youth with disabilities. The youth and students working with DVR staff have difficulty expressing themselves and exhibit behaviors that are unacceptable in the workplace;
- Youth in juvenile justice, youth services, and other programs outside of the public school system are often being missed; and
- Parent engagement can vary depending on the type of school (public vs. alternative) and the poverty or affluent level of the school.

**Response Statement:** DVR, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, will work to:

- Continue efforts to identify needs and programs for implementing pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS);
- Provide additional training for DVR staff and providers on the definitions, parameters, and expectations for Pre-ETS to minimize the confusion about what are allowable and unallowable expenses;
- Contact the Pre-ETS services team at the VRTAC-QM to complete a fiscal forecasting model of the ability to move from required to authorized activities;
- Add financial literacy training to their menu of purchased services, or to partner with other organizations like the Center for Independent Living to provide this service to young people;
- Engage field staff on implementing youth initiatives before roll out and finalization;
- Identify additional ways to access and provide outreach to students with disabilities in the community outside of the public-school system;
- Consult with the Title I Youth Program to determine ways in which the two programs can work together to increase the availability of work experiences for youth with disabilities in Wyoming; and
- Work to expand the use of apprenticeships and other career pathways for youth with disabilities throughout the State.

## **K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES**

### **1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey, an estimated 41,294 working-age people with disabilities live in Wyoming. This constitutes 10.6% of the State's overall working-age population.

## **2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:**

### **A. THE VR PROGRAM;**

During FFY 2018–2019, DVR experienced an 8% decrease in people applying for services. This decrease was based on the low unemployment rate in Wyoming (currently 3.7%).

Based on historical trends, DVR is estimated to have 1,500 new eligible individuals who will apply for services in FFY 2020 and 1,600 new eligible individuals who will apply for services in FFY 2021. DVR estimates that it will serve 4500 total individuals in FFY 2022 and 4800 in FFY 2023.

### **B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND**

An individual shall be eligible to receive supported employment services using Title VI Part B funds if:

- The individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services;
- The individual is determined to be an individual with the Most Significant Disabilities; and
- A comprehensive assessment of the individual's rehabilitation needs is made that includes an assessment of rehabilitation career and job needs, which identifies supported employment as the appropriate rehabilitation objective for the individual.

Individuals appropriate for supported employment are those:

- Youth and adults for whom competitive integrated employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a Most Significant Disability;
- Individuals who, because of the nature and significance of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services from the DVR; and,
- Individuals who need extended services provided by another entity after achieving an employment outcome to maintain employment.

The following is the total number of clients for the last two years:

- FFY 2020: 0 Closed Successful.
- FFY 2021: DVR currently has 376 receiving services under an Individual Plan for Employment.
- Estimated for FFY 2020: 400
- Estimated for FFY 2021: 450

### **C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not in an order of selection.

### **THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not in an order of selection.

## **3. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.**

During FFY 2022, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) estimates the following will be accomplished, based on the previous years' data and service projections:

- Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation –
  - Number of individuals served: 4,500; Cost of services: \$10,575,000.
- Title VI, Part B, Supported Employment –
  - Number of individuals served: 200; Cost of services: \$100,000. If these funds are not available, then Title I funds will be used.

During FFY 2023, DVR estimates that the following outcomes will be accomplished based on the previous year's data and service projections:

- Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation –
  - Number of individuals served: 5,000; Cost of services: \$11,632,500.
- Title VI, Part B, Supported Employment –
  - Total individuals served: 300; Cost of services: \$ 150,000. If these funds are not available, then Title I funds will be used.

## **L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

### **1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment, economic self-sufficiency, personal independence, and full inclusion into the community. In 2019, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council established new goals for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which includes DVR. The SRC provided specific recommendations for the State plan and again through the public comment process. The DVR and SRC met and reviewed priority goals based on these recommendations.

### **2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS**

In December 2019, the Wyoming Workforce Development Council established the following goals for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which includes DVR. The Council is working to establish priorities for the following goals but has not yet done so. The goals include the following:

**Goal 1:** Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System;

**Goal 2:** Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts;

**Goal 3:** Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers;

**Goal 4:** Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources;

**Goal 5:** Use Career Pathways to prepare individuals for career opportunities in all industries. DVR proposes additional goals specific to VR, based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and input from SRC;

**Goal 6:** Improve services to transition-age consumers by increasing the number of consumers served and successful outcomes by 5%.

**Priority:** Collaborate and strengthen partnerships with local school districts and health and human service entities to increase referral of transition-age consumers.

**Goal 7:** Increase the DVR's presence and partnerships with businesses across the state.

**Priority:** Strengthen partnerships with businesses by increasing outreach.

**Goal 8:** Continue to improve recruitment, training, and retention of staff.

**Priority:** Develop and conduct a training needs analysis of DVR field staff to address competency gaps.

**Goal 9:** Develop and establish a plan to increase and improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

**Priority:** DVR will collaborate with other VR programs in the country to help establish minimum expectations for service provider experience or certification to help ensure quality service delivery to consumers receiving VR services in Wyoming.

**3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

**A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;**

These goals were developed by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council: an analysis of the comprehensive statewide assessment, input from SRC, and DVRs performance in meeting the standards and indicators.

**B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND**

These goals were developed by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council: an analysis of the comprehensive statewide assessment, input from SRC, and DVRs performance in meeting the standards and indicators.

**C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.**

These goals were developed by the Wyoming Workforce Development Council: an analysis of the comprehensive statewide assessment, input from SRC, and DVRs performance in meeting the standards and indicators.

**M. ORDER OF SELECTION WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:**

**A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**F. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able to serve all individuals and is not in an order of selection.

**N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS**

**1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to ensuring that rehabilitation services are made available statewide to individuals with the most severe disabilities who have not traditionally been competitively employed or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent. The goal of the State's supported employment program is to maintain a system whereby individuals with the most significant disabilities are afforded the opportunity to participate in competitive integrated employment.

Supported Employment Services are provided on a statewide basis, with 20 community rehabilitation programs and a number of independent vendors currently providing services. DVR prioritizes the use of supported employment models that maximize competitive integrative opportunities for persons with most significant disabilities in real work sites, doing meaningful work. The DVR explores comparable benefits and makes appropriate referrals to other agencies to leverage additional funding sources to increase resources and expand opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities. Title VI funds will be used to provide supported employment services after the individual has been placed in competitive integrated employment.

Wyoming's annual allotment of Title VI, Part B funds is \$300,000 and is distributed through four regional budgets.

**2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:**

**A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND**

DVR's policy is to provide extended services for youth for up to four years or until a youth reaches the age of 25, with other entities providing long-term support after that time period. Funding for extended and supported employment services provided by the DVR to youth will come from the 50% reserve.

**B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.**

The DVR will use comparable benefits and/or collaborative services from public schools and third-party liability agreements for long-term support for individuals under the Medicaid Waiver system.

**O. STATE'S STRATEGIES**

**1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council established the following strategies for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which includes DVR:

**Goal #1: Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System.**

**Strategy 1.1:** Develop a comprehensive outreach plan to promote opportunities available from various One-Stop partners.

**Strategy 1.2:** Improve Career Pathways through coordination of education and training efforts among One-Stop partners.

**Strategy 1.3:** Prepare and respond to the changing employment landscape through leveraging integrated partnerships.

**Goal #2: Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts.**

**Strategy 2.1:** Explore new resources and use those already available through One-Stop partners to promote the One-Stop System.

**Strategy 2.2:** Oversee the development and implementation of cross-training opportunities across One-Stop partners to increase awareness of the Workforce Development System.

**Strategy 2.3:** Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan increased communication among One-Stop partners.

**Strategy 2.4:** Explore ways to highlight the personal impacts of the One-Stop System.

**Strategy 2.5:** Promote the WWDC's strategic planning efforts to highlight achievements.

**Goal #3: Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers.**

**Strategy 3.1:** Leverage the Wyoming Grown program to encourage Wyoming natives to return to the state to live and work.

**Strategy 3.2:** Establish mechanisms to identify the specific support and resource needs of employers and job-seekers to streamline services.

**Strategy 3.3:** Implement One-Stop enhancements to provide expanded outreach beyond One-Stop Centers.

**Strategy 3.4:** Coordinate with Wyoming employers to strategize ways to recruit out-of-state job seekers.

**Strategy 3.5:** Coordinate with One-Stop partners to provide skill development opportunities for in-demand and emerging jobs.

**Goal #4: Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources.**

**Strategy 4.1:** Use Next Gen Sector Partnerships to better coordinate One-Stop efforts.

**Strategy 4.2:** Integrate training efforts across partners to ensure consistency and increase efficiency.

**Strategy 4.3:** Evaluate and strengthen One-Stop partnerships with government agencies to implement seamless wrap-around services.

**Strategy 4.4:** Ensure effective and efficient coordination among One-Stop Centers and partners to maximize resources and integrate outreach efforts.

**Goal #5: Use the Career Pathways System to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries.**

**Strategy 5.1:** Expand internal and external efforts to identify and place qualified participants into training programs aligned with career pathways.

**Strategy 5.2:** Evaluate mechanisms to promote career pathways to key One-Stop partners.

**Strategy 5.3:** Explore opportunities to expand apprenticeships, internships, and mentor programs for those in rural and urban areas.

**Strategy 5.4:** Use the Career Pathways System to attract out-of-state youth to Wyoming and encourage existing Wyoming youth to stay in the State.

**Strategy 5.5:** Leverage One-Stop partnerships to prepare the next generation of the Wyoming workforce through youth-specific opportunities.

DVR proposes DVR-specific strategies based on goals taken from the analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and recommendations from the SRC:

**Goal #6: Improve services to transition-age clients by increasing the number of clients served and successful outcomes by 5%.**

**Strategy 6.1:** Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for clients who attend post-secondary programs.

**Strategy 6.2:** Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.3:** Implement outreach and informed choice strategies to include strategies to enhance effective communication for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Strategy 6.4:** Conduct outreach activities for teachers, students with disabilities, and their family members to provide information on vocational rehabilitation services.

**Strategy 6.5:** Increase and strengthen transition services for Hispanic/Latino Americans or other minority students with disabilities who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.6:** Increase the availability of Pre-Employment Transition Services to school districts across the State.

**Strategy 6.7:** Develop strategies that will increase transition services for students with disabilities before age 16.

**Goal #7: Increase the presence of DVR services and partnerships with businesses across the state.**

**Strategy 7.1:** Increase service capacity and quality of services delivered through the service providers.

**Strategy 7.2:** Strengthen partnerships with businesses by increasing outreach.

**Strategy 7.3:** Strengthen partnerships with organizations that serve Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities by meeting with Tribal leaders to establish a working relationship and DVR collaboration for mutual consumers.

**Strategy 7.4:** Include cultural diversity and awareness training topics in VR staff training to increase and strengthen services to minority groups.

**Strategy 7.5:** Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities with a focus on individuals living in rural areas and underserved populations.

**Goal 8: Continue to improve staff recruitment, training, and retention.**

**Strategy 8.1:** Continue to provide financial assistance for DVR staff to obtain the Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling through an accredited program, as the budget allows.

**Strategy 8.2:** Continue to provide financial assistance for DVR staff to obtain their Certified Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC) license, as the budget allows.

**Strategy 8.3:** Develop regular cross-training opportunities with the DVR and WIOA partner staff to increase understanding of each division's role responsibilities and services for participants, including those with the most significant disabilities.

**Strategy 8.4:** Develop and conduct a training needs analysis of DVR staff to address competency gaps.

**Goal 9: Develop and establish a plan to increase and improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

**Strategy 9.1:** Develop and implement a benchmark-fee schedule to overcome current disparities in payment for provider services.

**Strategy 9.2:** Meet with existing CRPs to determine strategies or incentives to help expand services into rural areas of the State.

**Strategy 9.3:** Include CRPs and individual services providers in training that is provided for DVR staff.

**Strategy 9.4:** Create a guidebook for CRPs that includes rates and fees, processes, training opportunities and expectations, collaborations, and definitions for service provisions.

**Strategy 9.5:** Reevaluate the current fee-for-service structure to align rates across CRPs, integrate a milestone benchmark system, and overcome current disparities in payment for provider services.

**Strategy 9.6:** Add feedback questions related to CRPs and job coach services to the satisfaction surveys sent to DVR consumers.

## **2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS**

**Assistive technology services and devices:** A broad range of assistive technology services and devices are provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process. DVR uses Centrum for Disabilities, a non-profit agency that provides assistive technology evaluations and equipment to clients throughout the state. DVR also regularly collaborates with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) and Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) when helping consumers evaluate and meet their assistive technology needs.

An AgrAbility program developed by the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) began in May 2006 as a grant program administered by the University of Wyoming. The DVR Administrator is on the AgrAbility advisory panel. DVR continues to work with the program to provide assistive technology services to the agricultural community. Assistive technology services and devices are available on a statewide basis.

### **3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM**

**Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities:** Wyoming's population consists of 83.2% white/Caucasian, 8.1% Hispanic/Latino, 2.7% Native American, and 1.8% other racial groups. Hispanic/Latino and Native Americans represent the significant minority groups by population size in Wyoming.

With the Hispanic/Latino population, the CSNA found the main reason for underserved clients in the population is because of a particular distrust in government, as well as a tendency to rely on family to take care of individuals with disabilities in the community. DVR is committed to developing outreach efforts to Hispanic community groups to cultivate relationships that will encourage referrals. DVR will also collaborate with community partners to develop a plan to conduct intake interviews directly with Hispanic individuals rather than require these individuals to come to a DVR office to apply for services.

With the Native American population, Wyoming has two tribal reservations with autonomous governing bodies. Collectively, they represent the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes. Typically, these reservations are very rural, isolated, with high poverty and high unemployment rates.

DVR has counselors who serve each of the reservation areas. These VR counselors meet with local Indian Health Services and tribal government staff to identify potential referrals. Generally, staff members work out of tribal offices when meeting with applicants/clients living on the reservation. Native Americans living on reservations face unique challenges.

1. They are eligible for a combination of tribal, federal, and state programs to meet their vocational and health care needs. This requires extensive coordination and cooperation between agencies.
2. They are faced with significant cultural and economic barriers. Unemployment on Wyoming's reservations varies from 70% to 80%. Very little private employment is available. Most individuals are employed by either tribal or federal governments.

Wyoming is fortunate to have two American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs (AIVRS), which have greatly improved access to vocational rehabilitation services for those Native Americans served by these AIVRS Programs. DVR has established an ongoing working relationship with the Northern Arapaho program. The Division has assigned a VR counselor to work with that project to assist them in program development. Native American clients living on reservations have the choice of either being served by the AIVRS, the State Unit or jointly by both programs. We encourage clients to be served either by the AIVRS Program or jointly by both programs. The AIVRS Programs have a better grasp of the cultural and service-delivery barriers that exist on reservations. DVR does not plan to conduct extensive outreach activities on the reservations as this function can more effectively be conducted by the AIVRS Programs. DVR efforts will be to network with the AIVRS Programs to ensure that Native American clients have access to the full range of vocational rehabilitation services. DVR has a formal cooperative agreement with each AIVRS Program and is working to update both agreements in 2022.

### **4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)**

The following strategies are taken from Section O:

**Strategy 4.1:** Use Next Gen Sector Partnerships to better coordinate One-Stop efforts.



**Strategy 5.1:** Expand internal and external efforts to identify and place qualified participants in training programs aligned with career pathways.

**Strategy 5.3:** Explore opportunities to expand apprenticeships, internships, and mentor programs for those in rural and urban areas.

**Strategy 6.1:** Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for clients who attend post-secondary programs.

**Strategy 6.2:** Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.3:** Implement outreach and informed choice strategies to include strategies to enhance effective communication for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing or visually impaired.

**Strategy 6.4:** Conduct outreach activities for teachers, students with disabilities, and their family members to provide information on vocational rehabilitation services.

**Strategy 6.5:** Increase and strengthen transition services for Hispanic/Latino Americans or other minority students with disabilities who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.6:** Increase the availability of Pre-ETS to school districts across the State.

**Strategy 6.7:** Develop strategies to increase transition services for students with disabilities before age 16.

## **5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE**

**Strategy 9.1:** Establish minimum expectations for service provider experience or certification that will help to ensure quality service delivery to consumers who receive employment services or other VR services.

**Strategy 9.2:** Create a guidebook for CRPs that includes rates and fees, processes, training opportunities and expectations, collaboration, and definitions for service provisions.

**Strategy 9.3:** Include CRPs and individual service providers in the trainings provided for DVR staff.

**Strategy 9.4:** Meet with existing CRPs to determine strategies or incentives to help the CRPs expand services into the rural areas of the State.

**Strategy 9.5:** Reevaluate the current fee-for-service structure to align rates across CRPs, integrate a milestone benchmark system, and overcome current disparities in payment for provider services.

**Strategy 9.6:** Add feedback questions related to CRPs and job coach services to the satisfaction surveys sent to DVR consumers.

## **6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA**

The following strategies correspond with the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA:

**Strategy 6.2:** Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.3:** Implement outreach and informed choice strategies to include strategies to enhance effective communication for youth who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Strategy 6.5:** Increase and strengthen transition services for Hispanic/Latino Americans or other minority students with disabilities who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.6:** Increase the availability of Pre-Employment Transition Services to school districts across the State.

**Strategy 7.1:** Increase service capacity and quality of services delivered through the service providers.

**Strategy 7.2:** Strengthen partnerships with businesses by increasing outreach.

**Strategy 7.3:** Strengthen partnerships with organizations that serve Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities by meeting with Tribal leaders to establish a working relationship and DVR collaboration for mutual consumers.

**Strategy 7.4:** Include cultural diversity and awareness training topics in VR staff training to increase and strengthen services to minority groups.

**Strategy 7.5:** Increase work experience opportunities for adults with disabilities with a focus on individuals living in rural areas and underserved populations.

## **7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The following strategies are taken from Section O:

**Strategy 1.3:** Prepare and respond to the changing employment landscape through leveraging integrated partnerships.

**Strategy 5.3:** Explore opportunities to expand apprenticeships, internships, and mentor programs for those in rural and urban areas.

**Strategy 6.2:** Increase and strengthen transition services for eligible students who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.5:** Increase and strengthen transition services for Hispanic/Latino Americans or other minority students with disabilities who are exploring their employment future.

**Strategy 6.6:** Increase the availability of Pre-ETS to school districts across the State.

**Strategy 6.7:** Develop strategies to increase transition services for students with disabilities before age 16.

**Strategy 7.1:** Increase service capacity and quality of services delivered through the service providers.

**Strategy 7.2:** Strengthen partnerships with businesses by increasing outreach.

**Strategy 7.3:** Strengthen partnerships with organizations that serve Native Americans and other minorities with disabilities by meeting with Tribal leaders to establish a working relationship and DVR collaboration for mutual consumers.

**Strategy 7.4:** Include cultural diversity and awareness training topics in VR staff training to increase and strengthen services to minority groups.

## **8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:**

### **A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;**

DVR will work with the State Rehabilitation Council to measure and report progress on goals and priorities, including those needs identified in the CSNA.

### **B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND**

DVR has provided innovation and expansion funding for activities designed to continue addressing needs identified previously in needs assessments. Most activities are designed specifically to expand and improve services available to people with the Most Significant Disabilities. DVR will continue to solicit ideas and programs used to improve or enhance services to clients with disabilities in the State, possibly to include additional community rehabilitation programs in the State.

The following activities are planned for innovation and expansion funding in the FFY 2021:

- DVR will provide funding support for the State Rehabilitation Council. Expenditures may include travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, facilitation services, and costs

related to consumer satisfaction/outreach. Estimated Cost: \$20,000; and DVR will provide funding support for the State Independent Living Council;

- Because of Federal grant award reductions in the Title VII, Part B — Independent Living Services program and estimated decreases in Social Security Reimbursement funds (program income transfers to the independent living programs), DVR will need to use innovation and expansion funds to support the Council. Expenditures may include travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, and facilitation services. Estimated Cost: \$20,000.

**C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.**

DVR has been very proactive in trying to overcome barriers for applicants and clients to access and participate in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs. The following is a list of efforts made to ensure equitable access:

- All DVR Offices are in accessible locations;
- All DVR public meetings are held in locations that are physically accessible to people with disabilities;
- All applicants and clients are informed that alternative formats for information (braille, large print, auxiliary aids, and reasonable accommodations) are available upon request;
- DVR makes special efforts to provide interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and for individuals who speak foreign languages;
- DVR participates in a “Safety Committee” that works to evaluate the accessibility and safety issues of all area offices;
- DVR has implemented a policy to coordinate referrals for the provision of statewide assistive technology devices and services to ensure clients can overcome barriers they encounter during the rehabilitation process;
- Through Wyoming Relay, DVR administers a telecommunication adaptive devices (TAD) program for free distribution of accessible telephone equipment to Wyoming residents with disabilities;
- Through Wyoming Relay, DVR administers a telecommunication equipment distribution (TED) program for free distribution of accessible telephone equipment to Wyoming residents who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Training has been provided to DVR counselors, assistants, and managers on the use of text telephones, the use of telecommunications relay services (Wyoming Relay, the Internet, and video relay), deaf culture, strategies for communicating with hearing-impaired clients, and the use of sign language interpreters. Such training is provided during regional in-service meetings conducted periodically across the State;
- DVR collaborates with the Wyoming Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to identify all known sign language interpreters in the State, evaluating their skill levels, and compiling and distributing the list to DVR staff, other service providers, government agencies, businesses, and individuals;
- Training is offered routinely to service providers, government agencies, and private businesses. Topics include deaf culture, communication strategies, use of interpreters, use of text telephones, and the Wyoming Relay program. Such training facilitates appropriate referrals to DVR, as well as helping to provide services and jobs for clients; and
- DVR staff work with all WIOA partner offices to ensure physical access, program access, and services access.

**P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS**

**1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:**

**A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS**

**Goal 1. Increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.**

- Rehabilitate at least 715 individuals with disabilities;
- Increase services to minority individuals with disabilities;
- Improve services for students and youth in transition from school to work; and
- Improve services to veterans with disabilities.

The results for this goal are mixed. In FFY 2017, the DVR:

- Successfully rehabilitated 590 individuals with disabilities;
- Worked with 262 consumers who self-identified as something other than white, non-Hispanic;
- Worked with 1017 transition students; and
- Worked with 263 identified veterans.

In PY 2019, the DVR:

- Successfully rehabilitated 612 individuals with disabilities;
- Worked with 546 clients who self-identified as something other than white, non-Hispanic;
- Worked with 1,033 transition clients; and
- Worked with 159 identified veterans.

The following strategies contributed to the achievement of the increase in the number of nonwhite, non-Hispanic that individuals DVR worked with:

- Determining what types of rehabilitation services are currently available to minorities with disabilities in the State of Wyoming;
- Identifying rehabilitation organizations currently offering services to minorities with disabilities to improve coordination of services;
- Identifying the most critical rehabilitation needs of minorities that currently are not met by existing services and facilities; and
- Determining what actions the DVR can take to improve rehabilitation services for minorities with disabilities.

The following strategies contributed to the achievement of the increase in the number of transition consumers DVR worked with:

- Continued to involve the Education Department in State Rehabilitation Council activities and meetings;
- Continued to encourage local education agencies to identify students with disabilities and make timely referrals to the DVR. The DVR's two transition consultants will work with the school districts, the Wyoming Education Department, and Division staff statewide;
- DVR personnel met with local education agencies to identify best-practice policies and to coordinate services between local school districts and Division field offices;
- Increased field staff communication with local education agencies regarding the DVR's mission and services. Transition consultants will take the lead on developing relationships with local school district administrative staff;

- Developed procedures with local education agencies to facilitate the timelier exchange of information regarding potential transition student referrals;
- DVR staff attended individual employment plan meetings when invited by the school; and
- Identified new systems to improve referrals and working relationships, including replicating successful service models within the State.

**Goal 7. Increase the percentage of acquired brain injury (ABI) clients successfully employed by 5%.**

This goal was met. In FFY 2017, DVR served 20 ABI clients. In PY 2018, DVR successfully closed files for 38 ABI clients.

The following strategies contributed to achieving this goal:

- Improved DVR staff training to recognize brain injuries as well as how to assist consumers with ABI on how to overcome obstacles in the workplace; and
- Improved collaboration with service providers to develop effective strategies on how to better assist consumers with brain injuries.

DVR continues to work with staff to code clients correctly in our case management system to ensure that we are serving this population to the best of our abilities.

This goal is being retired.

**Goal 8. Increase the percentage of SPMI clients successfully employed by 5%.**

This goal was met. In FFY 2017, the DVR successfully closed 181 SPMI consumers. In PY 2018, the DVR successfully closed files for 279 SPMI clients.

The following strategies contributed to achieving this goal:

- Encouraged the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division to support the expansion of successful employment models for these individuals;
- Initiated contacts with mental health centers and promoted supported employment services;
- Invited mental health personnel to attend Division in-services when training was presented in their area of the State; and
- Alerted mental health personnel to training via other independent entities.

Part of the reason for the increase in the number of consumers served may be because additional options were in place in the case management system for classifying the primary impairment of a person with SPMI.

This goal is being retired.

**B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

The State's low unemployment rate affects the State's ability to achieve goals and priorities. When the unemployment rate is high, applications for services increase and applicants experience increased difficulties in finding competitive employment. When the unemployment rate is low, the number of people applying for services decreases.

**Goal 1. Increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.**

- Rehabilitate at least 715 individuals with disabilities;
- Increase services to minority individuals with disabilities;
- Improve services for students and youth in transition from school to work; and
- Improve services to veterans with disabilities.

The results for this goal are mixed. In FFY 2017, the DVR:

- Successfully rehabilitated 590 individuals with disabilities;

- Worked with 262 consumers who self-identified as something other than white, non-Hispanic;
- Worked with 1017 transition students; and
- Worked with 263 identified veterans.

In PY 2019, the DVR:

- Successfully rehabilitated 612 individuals with disabilities;
- Worked with 546 clients who self-identified as something other than white, non-Hispanic;
- Worked with 1,033 transition clients; and
- Worked with 159 identified veterans.

The factors that impeded achieving the goal of successfully rehabilitating 715 individuals with disabilities and improving services for veterans with disabilities include the following:

- The low unemployment rate in the State has contributed to decreases in the number of people applying for VR services and veteran referrals to DVR.

**Goal 2. Increase by 5% the number of clients using the Small Business Development Fund and other resources for starting a small business.**

This goal was not met. In FFY 2017, the DVR successfully closed 41 small business consumers. In PY 2018, DVR worked successfully with 30 small business consumers to use this fund.

The factors that impeded achieving the goal include an overall downtrend in DVR's total overall number of clients, which presents challenges in finding clients to open small businesses. Economic difficulties in the State also affect the ability to support small business development.

This goal is being retired.

**Goal 3. Successfully rehabilitate 205 or more supported employment individuals with the most significant disabilities.**

This goal was not met. In PY 2018, DVR worked with 67 persons to successfully find employment. In PY 2018, DVR had 269 individuals in Supported Employment Individual Plans for Employment. DVR continues to have a healthy relationship with its CRPs and the Developmental Disabled Division. We are able to keep up referrals and find the necessary support to help clients become successfully employed. Wyoming has also adopted an Employment First initiative, where anyone on the Waiver services is encouraged to seek out employment before seeking other options.

The factor that impeded achievement of goal: Wyoming DVR struggles with coding people under supported employment, because the State does not have a large enough youth population to allow staff to work with the adult population.

This goal is being retired.

**Goal 4. Continue to improve the recruitment, training, and retention of staff.**

**Recruitment**

Increase the percentage of counselors with master's degree level counselors to 75%. This goal was not met. Ten of DVR's 28 counselors have master's degrees (36%).

Factors that impeded the achievement of goal:

- Wyoming DVR has had challenges in locating master-level counselors. DVR hires at the bachelor's degree level with requisite experience and assists the staff in obtaining their master's degree;
- A number of experienced counselors with Master's Degrees left our employment to take better-paying jobs as counselors in local school districts.

DVR will increase the percentage of counselors with a certified rehabilitation counselor designation to 50%. DVR continues to encourage and assist staff in earning the necessary master's degree coursework and recruiting individuals who hold the certification.

### **Training**

Increase training on disability topics relevant to staff needs and agency goals. Train staff on federal, state, and agency policies and procedures.

In 2019, DVR conducted regional in-service training for all counselors, managers, and consultants. The topics covered included information on various types of disabilities, case management, counseling skills, and leadership development. In 2020, DVR provided one in-service training for all staff in addition to regional training and a statewide in-service training. The main training topic was working with people with personality disorders. Additional topics were determined from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), quality assurance reviews, retention/training plans, and recommendations from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).

### **Retention**

Maintain a staff loss rate of 10% or less.

This goal was not met. During the calendar year 2019, 15 staff members (22% of staff) left their positions, compared to 17 staff members in the calendar year 2016.

Factors that impeded achievement of goal:

- The economic downturn in the mineral industry caused spousal transfers or moves out of state;
- Movement of staff to other job opportunities because of levels of education obtained; and
- Staff dissatisfaction with a lack of pay scale opportunities within the Department of Workforce Services and the State of Wyoming.

As noted previously, under the new contract clause, if a counselor has received education funding through the DVR, the individual contractually agrees to continue employment with the DVR for two years after obtaining their master's degree. If employment is terminated before this time, repayment may include forfeiture of a final paycheck and any annual or sick leave that has been accrued. These contracts were implemented in February 2020.

This goal is being revised and will continue in the next program year, as noted in previous sections, and based on information gathered through the CSNA.

### **Goal 5. Improve services to transition-age clients by increasing successful outcomes by 5%.**

This goal was not met. In FFY 2017, the DVR served 54 transition-aged individuals. In the PY 2018, DVR closed 31 transition client cases successfully.

Factor that impeded achievement of goal:

- With the shift toward providing Pre-ETS services, fewer clients are included in the General VR data. DVR is continually working to increase the number of participants in Pre-ETS.

This goal is being revised and will continue in the next program year, as noted in previous sections, and based on information gathered through the CSNA.

## **2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:**

### **A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS**

Historically, Wyoming does not have enough youth who require Supported Employment services. DVR was unable to serve as many adults as youth, so the adults were served under general rehabilitation funds.

Because of changes in the requirements on how the Supported Employment grant funds can be spent, DVR has struggled to fully expend the funds from the grant. As the Division must spend the same amount on adults in Supported Employment as we do with youth, this limits the number of consumers that we can classify as Supported Employment and thus creates difficulty for DVR to meet this goal.

Wyoming DVR did not achieve the goals listed in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year.

## **B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

The State's low unemployment rate affects the State's ability to achieve goals and priorities. When the unemployment rate is high, applications for services increase, and applicants experience increased difficulties in finding competitive employment. When the unemployment rate is low, the number of people applying for services decreases.

## **3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA, currently has two full years of isolated data available for the Measurable Skill Gains Indicator that covers the first two years of the PYs 2020–2023 Plans. The Department designates the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate.

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Department will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

In PY 202, DVR reported a 43.4% Measurable Skill Gain for all reportable individuals. DVR set a baseline goal of 35% for PY 2020 and 40% for PY 2021, both of which are currently above the reported national average for all VR agencies.

## **4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED**

DVR provided funding support for the State Rehabilitation Council. Expenditures included travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, facilitation services, and costs related to consumer satisfaction/outreach efforts.

- Estimated Cost: \$20,000
- Actual Cost: \$16,197.35

DVR provided funding support for the State Independent Living Council. Expenditures included travel, stipends, advertising, supplies, meeting room rental, interpreters, facilitation services, and costs related to consumer satisfaction/outreach efforts.

- Estimated Cost: \$20,000
- Actual Cost: \$18,223.25

## **Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES**



Ensuring quality Supported Employment (SE) Services are provided to individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities in Wyoming is a priority for DVR. Quality is measured by more than just the number of individuals who receive supported employment services. Quality also incorporates key values that include self-determinism, choice, person-centered support, quality of life, and full inclusion.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to providing quality supported employment services to individuals with disabilities. Providing training to VR counselors and supported employment service providers is essential to improving services. DVR has already conducted training with staff on this topic, and more is planned. DVR is also tasking its program consultants to develop training to assist service providers with understanding DVR services and best practices to transition the individual to long-term support, as needed.

## **2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES**

The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency provides time-limited services needed to support an individual in employment. Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 24 months of job-coaching and follow-along services, unless the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) indicates that more than 24 months of services are necessary for the individual to achieve job stability before transitioning to extended services. For youth with intellectual disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation can fund a maximum of 48 months of job coaching and follow-along services. Before the purchase of supported employment services, the need for the services, the appropriate extended services and funding, and the appropriate agency agreeing to provide the services are established and identified on the IPE. The transition to the extended services (long-term funding source) occurs when 18 months of job coaching and follow-along services have been provided, or earlier if the following three requirements are met:

1. The individual's employment is stable;
2. The individual has met the hourly goal of employment established in the IPE; and
3. The extended services are immediate without any interruption in the provision of ongoing services to maintain employment.

If the IPE indicates that more than 24 months of services are necessary for the individual to achieve job stability, the time-limited services of job coaching and follow along can exceed 24 months. After the individual has transitioned to extended employment, the individual must maintain employment for at least 90 days before the consumer's case is a successful closure.

## **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS**

1. **THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15]; ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE**

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. **AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN; ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY**

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN [19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;
5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.
6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.
7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Nicky Harper

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES; ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT. FOOTNOTES CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

<b>Signatory Information</b>	Nicky Harper
<b>Name of Signatory</b>	Nicky Harper
<b>Title of Signatory</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator
<b>Date Signed</b>	03/02/2020

#### ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency ensures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit ensures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	

The State Plan must include	Include
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, ensures it will comply with the requirements related to: Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
4. e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3. f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, ensures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	Yes
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.i. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.ii. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit ensures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency ensures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	Yes
6.a. The designated State agency ensures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency ensures that it will use funds made available under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency ensures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency ensures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with Title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

#### VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

##### All WIOA Core Programs

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

#### ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Additional Indicators of Performance

#### OTHER APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Vision, Mission, Goals, & Strategies

Appendix 2 – Policy 5-Certification

Appendix 3 – Infrastructure Funding Agreement-Attachment B to Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 4 – Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 5 – Attachment A to Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 6 – Cooperative Agreements